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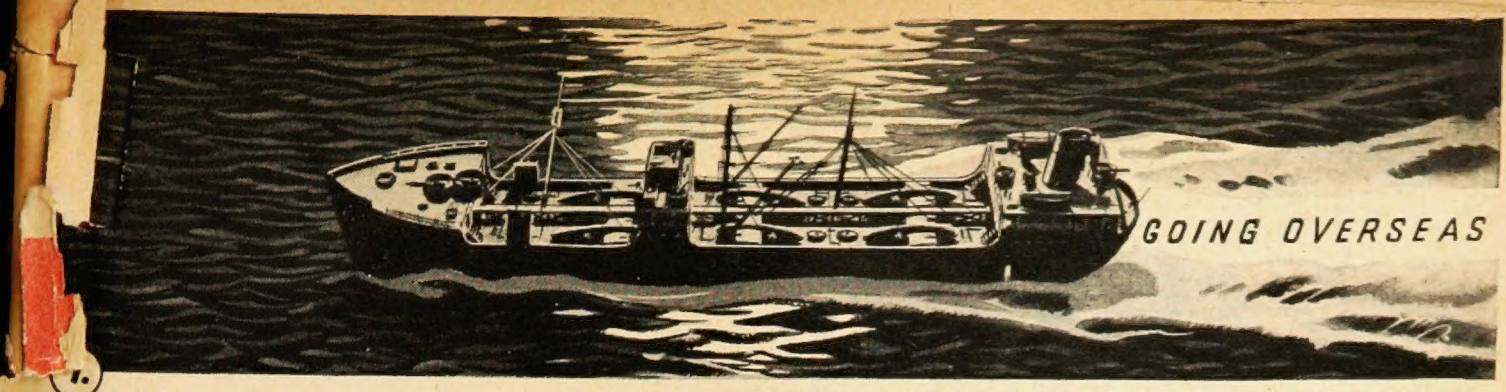

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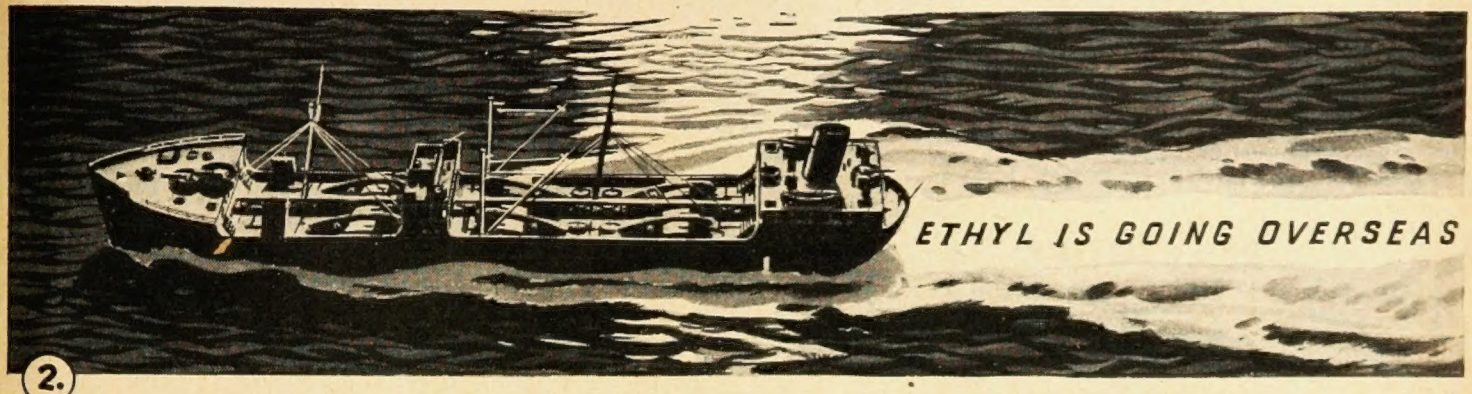

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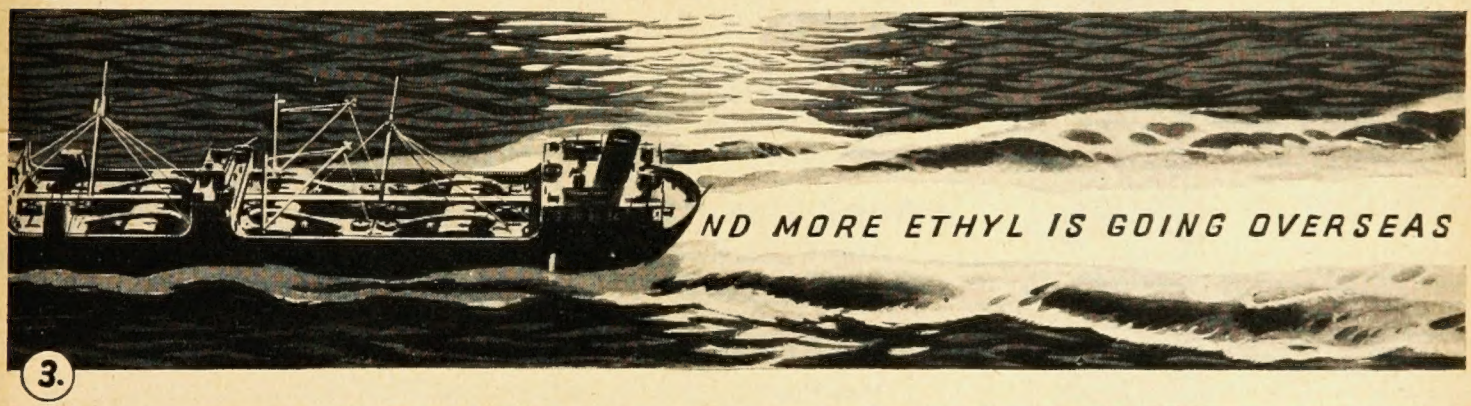

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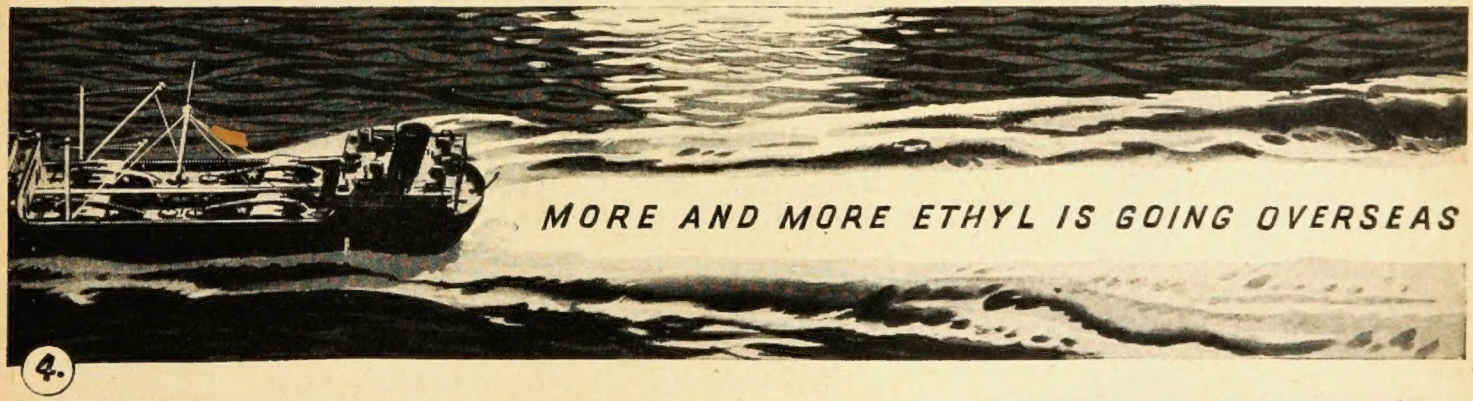

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LEE WAGNER, CIRCULATION MANAGER

How *you* can provide that NEST EGG for a rainy day . . .

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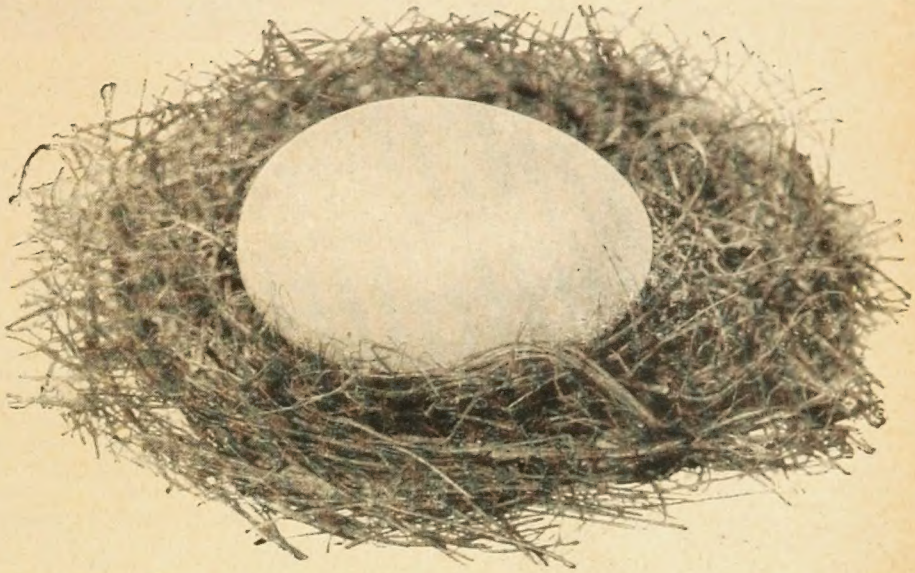

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$2,600.00—$25.00 weekly, payable every 30 days for as many as 104 weeks for loss of time through injury by accidental means . . . *as much as $2,600.00 for any one accident.* $12.50 weekly for partial disability for 26 weeks.

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Address .....

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Age ..... (18 to 55) *Occupation* .....

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VOX POP

"The Voice of the People"

ON GHOSTS, TEA CHESTS, AND BEACON HILL

WEST SOMERVILLE, MASS.—In Liberty, October 28, there is a very sweet story, Dear Johnny, by Steve Fisher. I am an old Yankee—by that I mean eighty-three years old—but I am still young enough to enjoy a wholesome, clean story. However, having lived in Boston all my life, I would suggest to Mr. Fisher that as he placed his story in Boston, he should study his localities. On a moonlight night the hero takes the charming girl to what he calls Tea Wharf and they enjoy dreaming of the ghosts rising from the water—of the tea which the indignant citizens threw into the river. The author probably refers to T Wharf, so named because it was built in the shape of the letter T. The chests of tea were thrown off a ship at another wharf.

Also he refers to a very well-known spot in Boston as "the Commons," using a plural. In all my years I never heard it called anything but "the Common." Many years ago it was the common pasture for such citizens as wished to pasture the family cow. About 150 or more years ago my great-great-grandfather drove his yoke of oxen from Maine to Boston to work on cutting down Beacon Hill. He pastured his oxen on "the Common."

Mr. Fisher is a talented writer, but he does not know his Boston. To us Bostonians, his story is almost a sacrilege. But it is still a darned good story and better than I ever wrote!—*L. M. Libbey.*

FAMILY PRIDE

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W. VA.—I was really surprised and pleased when I read John Alden Knight's article Leave the Warden Lay in the Woods (October 21). It is very interesting and instructive. I might add I particularly enjoyed the article, as the central figure, Carl Bidelspaker, the warden, knows me—quite well. His brother married my daughter!—*C. E. Miller.*

IT'S NO BULL, SOLDIER!

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—Recently, while awaiting transportation to an Army post, I ran across a copy of the October 28 Liberty. Imagine my surprise to see my own thoughts reflected in Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon's article Here's Your Country, Soldier.

Just a short while ago I returned to the States after thirty-two months' service in the Southwest Pacific, and after my leave in the "old home town" I thought exactly the same things FitzGibbon thought when he wrote that article.

Here's cheers and bouquets to a fellow soldier who can tell G. I. Joe exactly the true state of affairs, and the same to you for recognizing such a worth-while piece of literature.

To all the G. I.s who read his article—and who are still wondering as to its truthfulness—I wish to say, "It's no bull!" —*Lt. Don Chanre, S. C., A. U. S.*

CLIFTON, N. J.—The article Here's Your Country, Soldier, by Lieutenant William FitzGibbon, is tops with me. I have five sons overseas, and if they have the opportunity to read the article I feel certain they will enjoy it as much as I did. The lieutenant has a most interesting, entertaining, and pleasing style, and I shall be looking for more articles from his pen. —*Godfrey M. Meyer.*

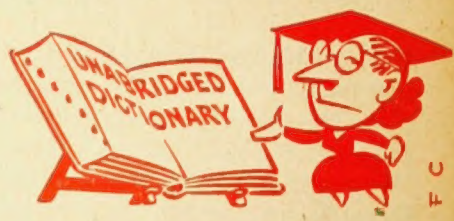
DEATH OF A FRENCH HERO

PARIS, FRANCE—It is with regret that I tell you of the death of Captain Pierre Neuville, whom I wrote about at length in my article Paris Now (December 2 Liberty). Captain Neuville, who was a senior member of one of France's oldest resistance movements, died September 27. He and his men fought under American command, and, according to an official report, they rendered such valuable service and suffered such severe losses that the commanding U. S. general promised they would be the first to enter Paris along with the Americans. However, Captain Neuville died before the promise could be kept.—*Erika Mann.*

BRINGING UP BABY

PRAIRIE CITY, OREG.—Thanks to H. G. Moody's outburst in October 28 Vox Pop, I had my best laugh since Pearl Harbor.

Moody claims it is incorrect to speak of "raising" children; that the correct verb is "to rear."



According to my mother and an English professor, one "grew" vegetables, "raised" animals, and "reared" children, which is all very well. However, in Daniel Webster's latest unabridged dictionary, the 22d definition of "raise" says: "to rear, to bring up, as children; also, to raise Cain, the devil, the dickens," etc. (which, of course, may be synonymous). But if Mr. Moody is going to be so meticulous, I still think the better usage is that you grow vegetables and *try* (look up definition) to raise children—or animals, if you prefer. Regardless of effort, most children "fetch" themselves up; so what difference does it make anyway?—*Mrs. Rod McHaley.*

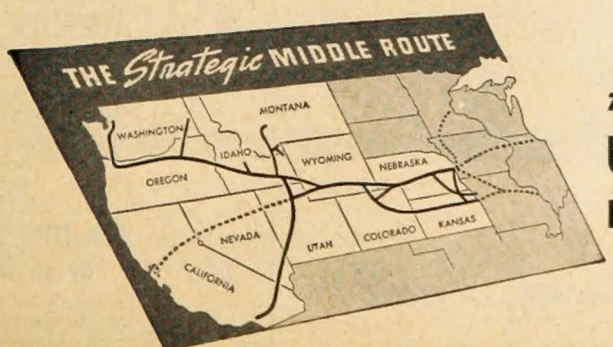
UNION PACIFIC
1869 DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY 1944

Guarding the Home Front

● Over Union Pacific's strategic middle route, uniting the East with the Pacific Coast, flows an endless stream of troops and war materials.

Keeping this traffic moving is the job of all employes. That they are doing that job so efficiently is more than the result of training. It's also due to their patriotism and to their staunch belief that in America there must not be any shackles on individual enterprise and initiative.

Along the "right-of-way" are hundreds of smaller town stations where the Streamliners and Limiteds seldom stop. Yet, the men assigned to those stations have a great responsibility. They must be constantly on the alert—safeguarding the movement of all trains. They are doing their part to speed victory.



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UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

RENAULT

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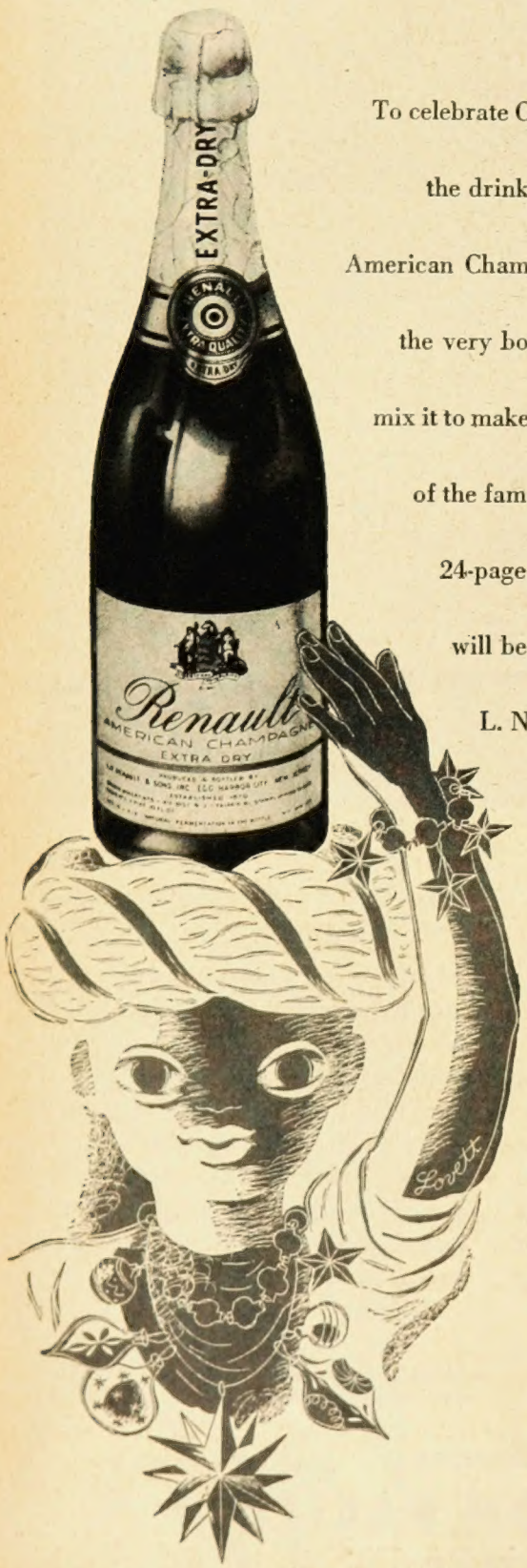

To celebrate Christmas, the day of days, enjoy the drink of drinks—Renault Extra-Dry American Champagne. Use it just as it comes from the very bottle in which it was fermented, or mix it to make a delightful punch, according to one of the famous recipes contained in Renault's 24-page Wine Recipe Book, a copy of which will be sent to you free. Address Dept. 25, L. N. Renault & Sons, Inc., Egg Harbor City, N. J., where American Champagne has been produced for three-quarters of a century.

Renault American Champagnes and California Gold Label Wines are distributed through McKesson & Robbins, Inc., New York.

Enjoy Renault—the Wine without Fault

BUY WAR BONDS

THE TIME FOR DECISION

By Sumner Welles

Liberty's Book Condensation

In this incisive book—hailed as the most important nonfiction work of the year—Sumner Welles points the way to a future world of peace and decency by highlighting the tragic lessons of the past. The excerpts selected are from the chapter with the most direct bearing on the problems with which America is faced.

MEN NEEDED TO DEVELOP AMERICA

By Harold L. Ickes

There'll be important, exciting jobs for many in making the most of our natural resources. They'll grow out of these specific plans of the Department of the Interior.

ROADBLOCK

By Lieutenant James N. Alsop

Here's what a communiqué means when it says, "Our troops have established roadblocks." It's a bitter private war—and the fortunes of armies may depend on it.

THE SENSE IN CENSORSHIP

By Bess Furman

A letter about dolls exposes a spy; one about drills reveals hidden diamonds. Here's how and why the Office of Censorship reads foreign mail—and what happens when code messages are intercepted.

G. I. SANTA AND THE HEAD-HUNTERS

By Osmar White

If you think you've seen inflation, take a look at what's happened to New Guinea natives who used to think a rusty razor blade was wealth! G. I. Joe has torpedoed all that and the Cannibal Islands will never be the same again.

IMPROVING YOUR AIR DIET

By Charles Scarlott

Better heating, cooling, cleaning, and humidifying of the air you breathe can make your life healthier and happier. Here's the outlook for postwar air conditioning of your home.

PIN-UPS BY THE MILLION

By Ab Jackson, Jr.

A quarter of Hollywood fan mail today sounds like this: "Please send a picture—you know the kind soldiers like—to brighten our lonely tent on Island X."

WARNER BROS. EMPLOYEE WITH GIRL

This is a scene from Warner Bros.' newest feature picture: TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT, from the novel by Hemingway.

It shows famed screenstar Humphrey Bogart with a girl named Lauren Bacall.

We believe that, with the release of this enormously dramatic film, Lauren Bacall becomes one of the most exciting discoveries in the history of motion pictures.

(Much of the credit for Miss Bacall's sensational debut goes to Humphrey Bogart, whose readiness to help a newcomer over the rough spots has made him as popular with his colleagues as with the picture-going public.)

•

Another sensational Warner Bros. discovery (made many years ago) was the fact that motion pictures may be adult, intelligent and mindful of social realities, and still be magnificent entertainment!

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (which takes up entertainment-wise where 'Casablanca' left off!) serves thunderous notice that "*combining good picture-making with good citizenship*" is a *permanent* Warner policy.

HUMPHREY BOGART
in Ernest Hemingway's
"TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT"

WALTER BRENNAN • LAUREN BACALL
DOLORES MORAN • HOAGY CARMICHAEL
A HOWARD HAWKS PRODUCTION
Screen Play by Jules Furthman & William Faulkner

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If he's got a Schick Injector Razor...
YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT PROBLEM IS SOLVED!
20 Schick Injector 20 BLADES
Schick Blades are back!

Yes, you "gift wrap" it yourself. But we can tell you in advance that nothing says "Merry Christmas" faster than a package of Schick Injector Blades—several packages if he's a special favorite! They're the keenest shaving blades that ever groomed a man's face and they're the *only* blades that make it possible for him to use his swell Schick Injector Razor again.

Only a Schick Injector Razor owner can fully appreciate this gift and he'll appreciate it every blessed morning he shaves. No combination of safety razor and blades provides so many exclusive shaving advantages!

While we're still unable to get the material for new razors (except for the armed forces)—we're now supplying all military *and* civilian demands for the blades. So don't pass up a sure-fire winner under the Christmas tree—a gift that shows how well you know your man—a cartridge of Schick Injector Blades!

SCHICK INJECTOR RAZOR BLADES

Magazine Repeating Razor Co., Bridgeport 1, Conn.

ACME

The scene looks peaceful, but Fortress crews can't relax—Jerry may be hiding out there.

AMBUSHES IN THE SKY

By Technical Sergeant M. R. ELLIS

ALL eyes must have been on the cloud. It was the only one in the sky. Miles below, a haze held the earth. Around and above, there was nothing but the brilliance of the sun and the thin blue air. The cloud, broad and black at its base, rose in gentle gray slopes and sheer cliffs topped by shining spires of white. It was a cloud of castles, of caverns and forests and streams cascading from cliffs.

It held the fascination of a mirage, and the flight of eighteen Flying Fortresses veered slightly from course and bore down on it. There were 180 men in the eighteen silver ships, ten in each. They were content because their mission had been accomplished, because they were on their way home, because the sun was bright and the cloud beautiful.

Using stratagems reminiscent of Indian fighting, the desperate, dying Luftwaffe lurks in clouds and traps unwary pilots

The cloud was very near now, and the gunners hung hypnotized on swinging guns; pilots leaned lazily against obedient control columns; bombardiers clamped knees and elbows warmly around covered bombsights. . . .

Then the cloud exploded! Tiny wisps of it came rocketing off. The spires lost profile and gave off trailing plumes of white. The gray cliffs blinked crimson. Then, like swallows, silver-gray wings dipped swiftly forward, and the formation of Fortresses rocked as a hundred bursts of cannon shook them. The leading Fortress blazed brilliantly, then fell in smoking pieces. Another Fortress slued off on a wing and slipped into the haze that held the earth. Two ships kissed wing tips and fell apart and went into spins of death.

Three seconds and it was over. In three seconds four Flying Fortresses and forty men went down. In three seconds the cloud was transformed from an object of ethereal beauty into a volcano spouting death.

One ball-turret gunner thumbed a burst and his burst went home. The enemy aircraft dead-leafed it down while the pilot hung darkly from a yellow parachute.

It was war in the air. The kind of war Fortress and Liberator men have come to know. It was another cleverly executed Boche trick. With planes painted the soft gray and silvery white of the clouds, the Hun had seen his opportunity and seized it, taken advantage of the moment nature had presented. And, what was more, he had scored.

Members of the flight of Fortresses had seen a formation of pursuit aircraft many miles out at nine o'clock some ten minutes before the time of attack, but they had been too distant to identify, and since friendly escorting aircraft had just left and another group was scheduled to pick them up, they had given the planes little consideration.

But the planes in the distance had been the Hun, and the Hun had spotted the formation and the cloud. Gunning past swiftly and far out ahead of the Fortresses, the flight of enemy planes had timed their attack so as to break through the cloud at the moment the Fortresses were within range. It was a masterpiece of timing, of ingenuity, and of airmanship.

There was another raid on another strikingly beautiful day. The target had been bombed. The wing of Forts was on course for England when the enemy materialized a dozen miles away in flight formation. At that distance it was difficult to number them, but as they drew nearer it was estimated there were between twenty-five and thirty—all ME-210s. They paralleled the formation, held out at 1,500 yards, and

(*Continued on page 13*)

With a TR on his shoulder

. . . AND THE KNOW-HOW UNDER HIS HAT

You'll find him in every corner of the world where American weapons of war are in action . . .

Wherever American precision instruments are guiding planes and projectiles and subs toward their targets, and ships toward their destinations.

He's in uniform, but he's a civilian. And his shoulder patch reads "Tech Rep." which stands for *Technical Representative.*

TR's not only help to see that our complex weapons perform reliably under combat conditions—they help our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and seamen to understand the new devices which are constantly reaching the fighting fronts . . . new planes . . . improved gun sights . . . intricate flight instruments . . . ship navigating instruments.

And, in the course of his duties, the TR sometimes stops hot lead. Occasionally he becomes a prisoner of war. For his duties often mean sweating it out in a foxhole, or riding in a bomber on an actual mission.

Wherever our Armed Forces go—there's a Sperry TR

The Sperry TR's, and their associate Field Engineers in this country, number nearly 600. Most of them are graduate engineers. They receive highly specialized schooling, and then put in months getting experience here at home.

For, once on their own in some remote spot, they must be able to keep the gyros spinning in bombers, fighters, and transport planes . . . to repair a shot-up computing sight . . . to adjust a revolving gun turret . . . to overhaul a ship's Gyro-Compass . . . to repair a damaged hydraulic ammunition hoist.

American Generals and Admirals have said fine things about TR's. One of them, describing Sperry TR's as "indispensable," recently said that not only have they trained thousands of Servicemen in the proper maintenance of equipment made by Sperry, but, "through observation of combat performance, have been instrumental in indicating improved methods of manufacture and maintenance." Many TR's, he added, have performed this service at great personal risk.

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New York

Signed
SEALED *and*
DELICIOUS

(*Continued from page 10*)
then moved slowly and deliberately forward. Perhaps a mile ahead of the Fortresses they went into file and struck a right angle to cross in front of the bombers.

Every gunner was poised. All eyes were hard on the assault line. All guns were in position for the attack. A gunner aboard one plane called a single fighter to the rear and high, but announced that it appeared as though the fighter had lost his formation and was hurrying to regain it. Another gunner called a fighter at four o'clock and level, but said he, too, seemed in a hurry to get back into the group. There were several other single airplanes hovering level and high to the rear of the formation, but they all gave the impression of being anxious to get back to the safety of the group. Gunners accorded them little attention. All eyes were on the thirty poised for attack.

But when the attack did come—and it came with the speed of a toad's tongue flicking flies—it came from four single airplanes to the rear. Turrets were wheeled about frenziedly, but two Fortresses went down and only a scattering of bursts was directed at the four fighters. The sharp attack accomplished, the thirty planes went back to formation and disappeared before friendly escort could be summoned to reckon with them. Another typical Jerry trick—a trick he has been forced to employ again and again because of the diminishing strength of his Luftwaffe.

Jerry's strategy of attack on bomber formations can never be forecast. With the odds continually mounting against him, he has had to count more and more on swift surprise, on hit-and-run.

JERRY has gone berserk at times. There was the great air battle of last January for which the entire First Division of the Eighth Air Force was cited by President Roosevelt. On that day the Boche lost his head. During an attack on enemy installations deep within Germany, he threw approximately 150 fighters against a formation of bombers perhaps one half the strength. The fighters were of all types: FW-189s and 190s; ME-109s, 110s, and 210s; Dornier 217s, JU-88s, and even old Stukas, along with four aircraft with Italian markings.

The attack began in this manner: A large formation of ME-210s followed the formation for a considerable time in B-17 deployment, and were not immediately recognized by all as the enemy until they suddenly peeled off and began vicious tail attacks. They hammered in and through the formation with such abandon that at least four of them collided and went down, victims of their own ferocity. As though the 210s had sounded the starter's gun, mottled black-gray FWs with silver bellies struck at the spearhead of the formation.

Then flights of JU-88s came over. Out of range of the Fortress guns, they dropped their bombs and fired their rockets on the formation. FWs trailing bombs on cables came hurtling through; 210s flying alongside used their side-barbette guns for deflection shots; 109s and 110s barrel-rolled in from every point of the compass to spin beneath, climb again, and strike back. One ball gunner claims he just clamped down on his triggers and kept his ball rolling. "They were everywhere. I couldn't aim. I just kept the lead pouring out as long as I thought my guns could stand it without melting."

One waist gunner put in a claim for two ships. "I hit one," he said, "and it went into a steep climb, turned on its back, and rammed another 210, so I figure I got two with one burst."

The attack continued for nearly an hour. There was no employment of strategy, nor did the attack follow any specific pattern. Many Fortresses went down, but for every Fortress the price was high, much higher than Jerry could afford to pay. And, to the everlasting glory of the boys that flew that day, the target was bombed!

An old Jerry trick is to simulate the antics and tactics of friendly fighter escort. The Boche will send up a strong formation of fighters to draw off the friendly escort. Some of our fighters engage them, and the moment they do, another but smaller force of the Boche pull alongside the bomber formation, acting the friendly escort as nearly as possible.

Lulled into a feeling of false security, inexperienced bomber crews are often suddenly bounced out of their daydreams by bursting twenty-millimeters. The fight is over before it has started, and Jerry has disappeared into thin air. Meanwhile the friendly escort, having routed the larger formation, returns to find gaping holes in the wing it had left only a few minutes before.

In the beginning, when fighter escort first came into being, there were reports of ghost ships firing into the bomber formations. With friendly escort hovering in close, a Fortress would suddenly be enveloped in twenty-millimeter bursts and go down blazing. No one reported having seen an enemy aircraft in the vicinity, and the escorting fighters certainly weren't shooting down their own bombers. Since the ghost ships usually picked off the bombers when the formation was flying above dense undercast, the mystery was soon solved. Painted the color of the clouds, Jerry hugged the undercast and closed in unseen to within a distance of a mile. Diving fifty or a hundred feet into the clouds, he would come up under the formation unnoticed, poke his nose out for the briefest moment, and, if he was in line for a kill, he'd pour a burst into the nearest ship and disappear back into the clouds before he had been discovered.

Our fighter escort soon put a crimp in ghost ships' activities by spreading a sheet of protection beneath the formation when there was an undercast, as well as a protecting umbrella above it.

THEN, of course, there are the individualists among the enemy pilots who have lived long enough and studied hard enough to constitute a real menace. Their numbers are few, but their kills per pilot are many. Bomber crews called this type of killer Limpy the Lone Wolf—Limpy because of the peculiar way he limped or bobbed his plane except when firing a burst, and the Lone Wolf because he was just that.

Limpy never put in his appearance when friendly escort was in the vicinity, but once the air was clear of our fighters, he'd come limping along somewhere from the rear or from behind some cloud. He always picked on the tail-end Charley of the

(*Continued on page 72*)

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Jet units, reducing take-off runs from 33 to 60 per cent, augment the take-off power of this Chance Vought F4U-1 Corsair fighter.

ON THE BEAM

BY WAYNE PARRISH

The Battle for Air Routes

From now on, the battle for air-line routes to foreign countries will be in full sway. The opening shots for international air commerce were fired in September, when the Civil Aeronautics Board held hearings for routes to Hawaii. This was followed by the opening of hearings in the entire Caribbean area, and in October the hearings for the North and South Atlantic routes were scheduled to get under way. Next will come routes to Asia and Oceania, which includes Australia and New Zealand.

It won't be until some time in the spring of 1945 that the Civil Aeronautics Board will be prepared to hand down decisions, but in the meantime much will be said in Congress and in the press on the highly controversial subject of whether the United States should permit numerous air lines to fly around the world or should consolidate its efforts in one single company. The monopoly idea is bound to create much opposition.

Pan American Airways is proposing a single community company, a large company in which all air lines have an ownership. Such a company would be known as a "chosen instrument," which means that it would be the favored company of the U. S. government and would get all or most of the government support.

United Air Lines has tended to favor such a company, although United's ideas have not been very clear-cut.

All other air lines, however, are opposed to the chosen-instrument policy, and so far, the government has been opposed, too. It appears that the government does not want to break up the Pan American system, and will undoubtedly add to it, but it does favor the opening up of additional air services by other companies. Such companies would not be directly competitive with Pan American, except possibly in a few areas, but would prevent a monopolizing of foreign air routes by a single concern.

Meantime foreign air lines are making plans to operate to the United States. The Swedes, the British, and the Dutch especially have formulated their plans and want to operate reciprocally with American companies. Since about 75 per cent of all transatlantic air traffic will originate in this country, the U. S. government wants to give U. S. air lines ample opportunities to carry our own air traffic abroad.

What happens between now and next summer will have a great bearing on our future relations with the world. The titanic struggle for air routes has begun.

A New Transport

Those of you who are interested in new transport airplanes may want to know about a projected thirty-passenger twin-engined landplane which the Glenn L. Martin Company has designed. The plans have been submitted to the air lines for study.

Known as Model 202, it is designed for short-haul service and based on the power of two Wright R-2600 engines or two Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines. Normal gross weight is estimated at 32,500 pounds; and weight, empty, 21,842 pounds. Useful load is estimated at 10,658 pounds. Other data are: wing area, 740 square feet; vertical tail area, 145 square feet; horizontal tail area, 160 square feet; take-off power, 1,900 B. H. P.; propeller, Hamilton standard, 13 feet 6 inches.

Model 202 is especially designed to get into and out of small airfields. The runway length needed for partial engine take-off is given as 2,600 feet, and for landing at sea level, 3,250 feet. Both high- and low-wing models have been designed.

The Martin company drew up the specifications for the Air Transport Association's committee studying aircraft designs for the air lines.

"The Old Order Changeth . . ."

The automobile is going to have to get out of the way of airplanes in the future. In Los Angeles, plans are going ahead for the enlargement of the present municipal airport, and when the runways are extended westward, all surface traffic on Sepulveda Boulevard will cross the airport through an underpass below the runways. Some airport designs in large cities call for the terminal to be located in the center of the airport, with automobiles reaching the terminal by long underpasses.

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But the kind of languorous puffs which trail off into nothingness is not the type of smoke America wants... nor the kind of smoke which far-seeing business men and Industrialists are planning for Peace time.

The smoke for which these men plan today will be continuous, pour ceaselessly from chimneys and stacks of factories where men are at work. Where Americans are building for the future upon a traditional foundation of Private Enterprise...Freedom of Opportunity for Labor —where men, free of the fear of depression and insecurity, are setting new and higher standards of living for the world.

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Liberty
THE MAGAZINE OF A FREE PEOPLE

Alaska holds opportunity—but in fields unmentioned by its boosters. You could make a go in Anchorage as salesman, clerk, or mechanic.

ALASKA BECKONS—OR DOES IT?

A man who knows his way around Alaska gives you the low-down on where our new frontier's opportunities lie—and where they don't

BY PETER WOOD

WHEN President Roosevelt made his North Pacific tour, he was impressed by the weather, the people, and the possibilities of Alaska. In his Bremerton talk to the nation, he invited all ambitious servicemen to migrate to Alaska after the war to settle the wilderness. Such a general invitation, whether given by the President of the United States or by others of lesser political stature, never fails to raise the hackles of the resident Alaskan.

Yes, there is opportunity in Alaska, but for heaven's sake don't come barehanded, uninitiated, and practically broke. You'll find that Alaskans ask only one thing of you, if you are to be welcomed into the territory: come prepared to put a lot into Alaska—as well as take a lot out! So even if you have served your country well, brother, serve yourself equally well by coming with the right slant on things—or you won't make the grade.

This is an attempt to give you that right slant. Perhaps the best way to do it is to clear up a few popular fallacies, and then tell you where the opportunity really lies. If you'll just remember that you could come here as a very young man, fade into a very old man, and still never quite understand Alaska, you'll be getting off to a good start.

Alaska has existed—and "outside interests" have thrived—on two principal industries, gold mining and fishing. Now, in almost any story on Alaskan opportunity you are advised that mining still holds great possibilities for the newcomer—not wage jobs, but individual discovery and development. How about that? Well, there is much mineral wealth yet to be discovered; and if discovered, it may be made accessible. But gold mining is well in the hands of large companies, and they do not always make a killing. The gold lies from forty to ninety feet under the surface of bedrock, covered by frozen ground or permafrost, and this must be removed by thawing before the free gold can be taken out.

Placer gold mining is the only gold mining in Alaska, according to sourdoughs, because the area is glaciated—scraped over by centuries of grinding ice. The glacial crusher process has sifted the heavy gold into crannies in the bedrock—formerly surface—and that is now covered by glacial deposit.

The individual's best bet to find the rainbow's end is to prospect until a strike is made and then sell out to the "interests" for a percentage or a flat sum. The back-breaking work, year after year, of successful prospecting is a pastime of comparatively few Alaskans. And even if gold goes to seventy dollars an ounce, extraction from old locations would take sizable investment.

So there you have gold mining. Does it sound inviting?

As for fishing in Alaska, Bristol Bay in particular, don't swallow the guff you hear about fortunes made in six weeks. Native Indian fishermen, Norwegian fishermen who came to settle in Alaska to fish, and the brainier of the Washington and Oregon fishermen quite often lose money or barely break even each year. Even this year, with prices up and a manpower shortage, very few individuals made a killing, and the killing amounted to around $1,600 in six or seven weeks—which is not a killing in the true sense of the word. But there is money in the fishing industry, and we will get to that later.

Another point that needs clearing up is the much-discussed possibility of increased agriculture in this north country. That brings up the subject of weather, and Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the surprising fact that Alaskan weather is enjoyable in many places. Southeastern Alaska has a winter like Seattle's or milder, and a very pleasant though somewhat rainy summer. Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley have a beautiful warm summer and a not too difficult winter. Fairbanks has cold winters, but the dry air and lack of wind make it the favorite season for many. Summers there are actually hot.

Three fourths of Alaska sits on top of permafrost. At Nome, no vegetables can

(Continued on page 60)

THE FRENCH THEY ARE A

Concerning a private of the first class with a left hook colossal, and a girl in a class by herself. Cousin Raoul might better have kept his right, or kicking, foot out of this international incident

PERHAPS Jeanne should not have leaned on the sea wall to gaze out over the Hudson. This crossed her mind when she looked up to find herself surrounded by three fresh characters who wanted to know whether she had two sisters or friends. She turned to flee and discovered herself the victim of an encirclement.

"Let me go!" she threw at them in a low voice, and they laughed.

That was when she first caught sight of the Private First Class. He went to work in a grave, efficient silence. A right hook hung one character over the wall, a left jab sent another sprawling under a most beautiful tree, and the third one never waited to learn whether Jeanne did have a couple of sisters.

"Oh, I thank you, sir," said Jeanne. "You have a left jab superb."

He stared at her from his six-foot-two ceiling. "A left jab superb," he repeated. "You know much about left jabs superb?"

"I know a good one when I behold it."

"You don't know enough to stay out of a dark neighborhood when you're alone," he said. "If you don't mind, I have to get out before an M. P. gets around."

He regarded the two victims. They were beginning to show signs of movement, but at his look they relapsed into the quiet of the sidewalk dust.

Jeanne took his arm, having to reach up for it.

"I will scram with you," she said. Jeanne's voice always had a touch of gaiety to it. "I live in that street." She pointed to the next side street off the Drive. The pfc. moved off with her.

"What kind of talk is that, a left jab superb?" he asked.

"You must excuse me," said Jeanne. "Sometimes I forget that the adjective must precede the noun. In France—"

"Oh, you're French?" he asked.

"I am American," she said with heat.

After the first World War Jeanne's father did not go home. Instead, he married Jeanne's mother and stayed on in Paris. When Jeanne was fifteen he died. Finding life insupportable without her husband, the mother followed him in a couple of years, Jeanne told the pfc. quietly. Whereupon Jeanne went to live with an aunt in Passy, took a business course, and went to work in the office of a wholesale perfume house. When things got too bad, after the breakthrough at Sedan, Jeanne's American citizenship stood her in good stead and she managed to get out. Now she was living with her father's mother and working in the office of a wholesale perfume house.

"I am a *dactylo*," she said, then corrected herself. "A stenographer."

They paused in front of the middle-class walk-up where she lived. "It's a much more beautiful word. It's like dactyl —that's a poetic meter."

His voice was lively and thrilling, Jeanne found. His name was George Petersen, he came from the Middle West, he was stationed near the city, and he could get in week-ends, usually.

"I would ask you up to meet my grand-

Raoul sat on the cold stone below him, a look of pain and surprise on his face.

FUNNY RACE

BY LYON MEARSON

ILLUSTRATED BY AL SCHMIDT

mama," said Jeanne, "but she is no doubt well asleep by now." Jeanne spoke English without an accent, only betraying her origin by an occasional foreign inversion.

"My leave is up at six tomorrow night," said the pfc., "in case you're interested."

It appeared that Jeanne was, and that's how it happened that George went to church the next morning with Jeanne Martinson and her grandmama.

JUST three weeks later Jeanne stood in front of her dresser mirror and carefully placed three improbable flowers and a couple of impossible leaves on the side of her thick brown hair.

"This is a hat amusing," said Jeanne.

"It is indeed," said the old lady. "Anything special on tonight?"

"M-m-m," said Jeanne with enthusiasm. "It is special. It is George."

Her grandmother went on with her knitting. Jeanne shifted the hat amusing to another angle.

"Grandmama," she asked quietly, "have I your permission to become engaged to this George Petersen?"

Grandmama put down her knitting. "Have you decided to do it whether I give my permission or not?"

"Uh-huh," Jeanne nodded.

Grandmama took up her knitting again. "Then you have my permission," she said. "Nice of you to ask. You French girls are so well brought up."

Jeanne took off the floral decoration she called a hat, went over to her grandmother and kissed her on the cheek.

"Has he asked to become engaged to you?" the old lady inquired.

"That will come tonight," said Jeanne heartily.

The knitting stopped again for a moment, and there was an aged sigh. "Sometimes I think there was something I overlooked in my education when I was young."

"Oh, no, grandmama," said Jeanne. "I am sure you knew in advance when a man wished to wed with you."

"You may have something there," said grandmama, counting her stitches.

JEANNE and George ate in a small restaurant run by a fat Frenchwoman who had the traditional small mustache and whose husband came in from the kitchen every once in awhile to see how the customers were reacting to what he cooked. Jeanne jabbered away in French to Mme. Lina, and George sat soberly, trying to make out what was being said. Occasionally they glanced at him, smiled, and went on with their talk, and after a time the woman with the mustache went away to another table.

"Talking about me?" asked George.

Jeanne nodded with happiness. "It is my favorite to talk about."

George, the sober one, could smile at that. They didn't know too much about girls where George came from. But one learns, away from the farm, and the pfc. knew from the way his hand shook when he lighted her cigarette that something of the first importance was happening to him. And Jeanne, her eyes full of stars, nearly strangled because she forgot to blow the smoke out.

"You mean it?" asked George.

Jeanne, unable to talk, just nodded.

George paid the check and turned to Jeanne. "Come on, Dactyl, let's go."

Jeanne rose with haste. "O. K., private of the first class."

They went back to the Drive, where they had first met. The wind blew her hair back and she gazed at George and tried to look unconcerned, but it was an utter failure. As for the warrior, he cleared his throat a couple of times and looked exceptionally stern, so that Jeanne had to laugh.

"You look so mad with me," she giggled.

He took hold of her arm so tenderly that she was really surprised when, later that night, she found it black and blue. But then, she bruised easily. "When you were

"You look so mad with me," she giggled.

looking at me in the restaurant I made up my mind that if I ever saw you looking at any other man like that I'd sock him," said George.

"And me too?" she laughed at him, but something was in her throat.

"You too," he said.

"You have a left hook colossal."

A ghost of a smile hovered over the sober lips of the soldier. "Did anyone ever tell you that you have a face exquisite?" he asked.

She nodded. "Many men. But I'm glad it pleases you. That is most important."

"Jeanne," he said, "you're right. This is important. I guess maybe it's love." Even in the darkness Jeanne could see that his face had gone dead pale. "Jeanne, do you think—I mean, would you—"

Jeanne could just barely say it. "I love you very much," she said.

A couple of thousand years later they drew apart because so many people seemed to be passing who had no business being around at such an hour.

"That's the first time I ever kissed a girl," said the pfc.

"It was lovely," said Jeanne. "I am certain no one can kiss like you." It was true, too, for the flowers bloomed, the birds sang, and the stars did a jolly and undignified dance.

"I guess I must be a pretty jealous guy," he said, regarding her quietly.

"That's how I like it," said Jeanne.

"It better be," said George. "I've heard about French girls. You're flirtatious and a man's never sure of you."

Jeanne smiled gravely. "You can be sure of me, George," she said.

He looked into her eyes. "Yes," he said. "Let's go tell your grandmother."

"All right," said Jeanne. "It will be for her a surprise fantastic."

So they went home, and grandmama was surprised quite fantastically, the old lady being far from a dope.

PFC. PETERSEN had had little experience with girls, and none at all with falling in love and getting engaged. The whole business caught him quite off balance, and in a moment of surprised joy he was injudicious enough to tell a couple of the men in barracks that he was engaged to a girl who was partly French.

"Nice race, the French," said Private Jenkins. "Fond of light wines, dancing, and flirting."

George, sitting on his cot, pulled off a G. I. sock and inspected a G. I. hole in the toe. "Comes the revolution," he said, "the top kick will have to darn all our socks. Don't you worry about the flirting business. I'll take care of that."

"Sure you will, Georgie," said Private Costanzi. "Us American heroes'll change the habits of the world." He hummed a snatch of an old rhyme: "'The French they are a funny race—'"

Some of the men who knew the rest of the words laughed, and George pulled off the other sock. "If anyone here craves a luscious poke in the mush," said George, "just continue that line of talk."

"Scusit, plizz," said Jenkins. "We were just telling you for your own good—"

George stood up slowly. "Is there anyone here," he inquired, "who has my own good at heart and wishes to carry the discussion further?"

There was not, and George lay down on his cot and continued thinking about a special curl in Jeanne's brown hair that almost touched her right ear. From this point a train of thought led him to the fickleness of French girls, and that was unhelpful to his peace of mind.

His next leave was to be Saturday morning, and he hoped he'd be able to last.

Well, what with one duty and another, he lasted, and on Saturday morning he turned himself out with a polish that would have satisfied a sergeant major. He even hummed a bit of a tune, but turned it off quickly when he discovered it was about the French being a funny race.

JEANNE began looking out of the window for him half an hour before the appointed moment, and as time wore on and George did not appear—he was not yet due—she became worried. She tried to read a book, but failed wretchedly in the attempt. She turned on the radio; it did not interest her. She stared out the window. At last the doorbell rang.

Galvanized into Gallic life, she flew to the door and dashed down the stairs to the front entrance, where she confronted a young man in the uniform of a French sailor.

"*Jeanne! Ma petite!*" he gave out. The girl looked at him for a full moment before recognition registered with her.

"Raoul!" she squealed at last. "Raoul! It is you, of a verity?" she exclaimed in their mother tongue.

She threw her arms around Raoul's neck, and that was the moment that George Petersen, Pfc., detained at the gate because of a mistake in the date of his pass, walked into the picture.

(*Continued on page 52*)

Joe really wants to write that letter home. But it's hard to leave a good time and face the loneliness and memories writing brings.

NOTHING FROM JOE?

BY JOHN O'HARA

Somewhere in the Pacific. At high noon in New York, Monday through Friday, Kate Smith speaks, and she always closes her broadcast with the words: ". . . and remember, if you don't write, you're wrong." As is often the case, Kate speaks the truth; not always does she speak with beautiful originality, but in this instance she makes an enormously good point with a fairly bad pun. From the minuscule experience I have had with the armed forces I can tell you that every letter you don't write to the man you ought to be writing to is a slap in his face, or worse. It can be so bad that even a bad letter is better than none at all.

However, I am not setting out in this piece to re-emphasize what everyone with a gram of conscience knows. What I think will bear some examination is the question: Why don't the men write? Plenty of them don't. I think I know why. Maybe I don't know all the reasons, but I can give some of the more common ones. These words are being written aboard a naval vessel in the Pacific, but what I say also is based partly on observations I have made of Army personnel. Loneliness is everywhere, and color-blind.

Sometimes a boy doesn't write home because he doesn't want to get up from the card game. Behind that, though, may well be the horror of subjecting himself to the ordeal of concentration on his loneliness that would be required of a good letter. It means sitting down and thinking over how much and how many times he has missed his girl or his wife. God, how he missed her early yesterday morning! Lord, how he wanted her last night! He sits down to write, and he reproduces his own torture. It gets so out here, anywhere, that a man counts on only one person, his mother. But for her obviously there cannot be the violence of feeling and of loneliness that he suffers for his woman.

The most loved, the most trusted woman a man has ever known can become suspect under the conditions that prevail out here —and by out here I mean any place where a man is being kept from his woman. With some men, with most men, it is a simple suspicion: that awful thought of his woman in another man's arms, that look given to another man. With some men the fear of her sexual infidelity is not quite so important or active as it is with others. But with all men the awful thing is the fear of not being loved, of being dismissed, brushed off, forgotten. No man can stand that. There are men who have had all the time in the world for the self-torture of imagining their women making love to someone else. Some of these men have so expertly set the scene that they have expressed their appreciation of their own artistry by the supreme accolade, suicide.

Now, it is easy enough for a "sophisticated" woman back home to snort that such lack of confidence is degrading to the man and disgusting to the woman. But that is a point of view, and only a point of view. It is an attitude, and only an attitude. It has no life in it, nor blood. It might easily have been an attitude or a point of view in which a man concurred back home, and but for the war the man might have lived his life believing sincerely that on that basis he and his woman understood each other. It happens, though, that there *is* a war, and men are in it, and they have been separated from their women—and estranged from many previous beliefs. There is no damned use going on if you are not wanted. It's easier to keep sitting in on a card game than to go off by oneself, to concentrate on how much a man misses his woman (which is what he is sure she most wants to hear) —and to let that loneliness persuade him that wanted he is not!

I shall go now from a morbid discussion of the anatomy of loneliness to a slightly pathetic, almost funny, but very real reason why some men don't write. Some Joes "never learned to write a good letter."

This is, I repeat, very real, and some of my readers have the letters to prove it. It is not by any means a lack of education that keeps the men in this group from writing. Today, before I started this piece, I was artfully sounding out an officer who

A hundred yards from Jap positions on New Guinea, infantrymen pause to read the mail. Gives you an idea how much your letters mean.

is a scientist, a high-stand man in his field, or he wouldn't have the job he has. "I write such a lousy letter that I'm embarrassed," he said. "For twenty-seven months I've been writing my wife the same old things. She was in college the same time I was, so she never knew till I joined the Navy what a lousy letter writer I am. She knows now, all right."

It is, of course, always a fact that boys who are semiliterate, can't spell and aren't much at handwriting, have been among the most articulate, even poetic, letter writers, but they are exceptional. The lousy letter writer is abundant in all ranks and comes from all money classes.

This brings us easily to one of the reasons for the awkwardness and monotony of letters from the Army and Navy. I speak of censorship. There is one good novel in every man's life, and there would be many good letters and many good letter writers but for censorship. There is a recognized need for properly directed military censorship, but it affects the letters of the inarticulate in obvious ways: things are happening to these men that fancy telling would ruin, but little can be told, in fancy language or in the simple prose of the men to whom those big things happened. They know that continued irresponsible violations of the censor's regulations should be and will be punished, and this fact makes for an inhibited letter.

BUT nothing is so inhibiting to the warrior as letter writer as the knowledge that in many, many cases letters are censored by harassed, busy men who don't like the task in the first place, and who frequently are officers whom the warrior sees every day, all day. High poetic flights of expression are grounded by this circumstance, and the things deep in a man that he wants to tell his woman, the remembrance of intimate things past and lusty plans for the future—these things don't get said—and there is so little else to say.

As Kate Smith says, "If you don't write, you're wrong." But if your man in uniform isn't writing often, there may be a hatful of good reasons. A reporter in the Pacific explains for Joe

There are impatient, peevish people at home who must be told in the plainest of words that there is a war to be fought, and no war ever waited for a seaman second class to finish his letter to his girl in Grand Island, Nebraska. It doesn't seem possible that anyone could forget this, but people do. I like to write letters and I have rather more time to write them on shipboard than Joe Alnav from Grand Island. I write to practically no one but my wife, and yet I find myself sending home many letters which have been written in two phases, so to speak, letters which somewhere say, "Next day," or "Later." That Joe Alnav writes at all, with routine duty interruptions and sometimes enemy ammo to duck and our own ammo to fire, should establish the rate of letter exchange at not less than ten to his one.

It should be made clear to the home folks that when a man fails to write, it is not because he is remembering and exaggerating something unpleasant that occurred in the past, not that at long last he has decided to be annoyed about a happening in May, 1941.

That isn't the way things work in the services. If the man in the services lived in a tired seven-room house way out on Elm Street between Thirty-fourth and -fifth, he will begin to believe his descriptions of it to his buddies, which picture the house as vine-covered, immense, with a swimming pool and a four-car garage well stocked with 1942 models. If a man occasionally played golf in the low hundreds he will have his brothers in arms know that the golf he played was the envy of McSpaden.

EVERYTHING at home looks good from these distances, because that's the way the man wants it to be. And that goes for slovenly wives, whom the men describe as beautiful creatures; ratty kid brothers, who are like Mickey Rooney, only handsome, and any other less-than-perfect friends and relations the man may have. Forgiveness and tolerance come easily out here, and the men *want* to write. They want to remember, and they want desperately not to be forgotten.

And if you have a man out here who isn't writing because he doesn't feel like writing, maybe he is refraining through some superstitious notion that his next letter may be his last. And there is, you know, always the chance that he's right. Every time a man writes a letter out here it's an effort, if only in time taken away from sleep or woefully inadequate relaxation.

There is no excuse, there is none possible, for not writing him.

THE END

YOU'RE WINNING THE WAR AGAINST INFLATION

It's your acceptance of controls that has kept the lid on inflation.

Don't let anyone kid you. It's you—John and Jane Citizen—who are winning the battle of the pocketbook. Here's how and why you're dealing the enemy a major blow

BY GERALD W. JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WILDE

CHARLES MACKLIN has been dead nearly a hundred and fifty years, which is too bad, because he is needed in Washington now. He was the famous Irish actor whose voice was so expressive that it is said he could recite the multiplication table and have his audience in tears before he reached "six times twelve." No other man has ever been able to put such emotion into figures; and a man who can put emotion into figures would be a godsend to the war effort and perhaps a gracious gift to the rank and file of the people.

For there are a thousand stories, dramatic and moving stories, concealed in the flood of graphs, charts, tables, equations, and formulae pouring out of Washington. Consider, for example, this announcement made in the late summer of 1944: "In the sixtieth month, after the outbreak of the present war the inflationary trend in the United States stood at the level of 28 per cent." Can you imagine anyone being moved to either mirth or grief by that dry-as-dust statement? Yet, fully understood, it contains matter for both tears and laughter, for pride and humility, for hope and anxiety. Implied in that bald declaration is a picture of the nation at war, with its strength and its weakness revealed plainly and its opportunities and its perils clearly indicated. There is a highly emotional story in it, almost equally compounded of threat and promise, of splendor and cheapness, but with never a dull line.

It all hangs on the figure, 28 per cent. That figure represents the damage that war thus far has inflicted upon your dollar. Perhaps it may strike you as a foolish thing, even a sordid thing, to worry about damage to the dollar when young men are dying every day. But human suffering and human lives are also involved with the dollar. Destroy its value altogether, and you condemn millions to starvation; destroy even the greater part of its value, and you condemn many to want and misery for the remainder of their lives.

The damage that the war has inflicted upon the dollar is therefore anything but a vague abstraction, of interest mainly to financiers and economists. It touches every man, woman, and child in the country very intimately. Within limits — pretty broad limits, too—it measures the skill and effectiveness with which we are making war.

What does the figure of 28 per cent mean? Roughly, it means that when you take a dollar to market today you can buy with it only as much as you could have bought with seventy-eight cents in the early summer of 1939.

This is an average figure, covering all the items going into what we call the cost of living; that is, the necessities. On some items the figure is higher, on others lower. If you are buying onions, for example, your 1944 dollar is worth only fifty-five cents of a 1939 dollar; if you are buying bread, it is worth eighty-nine cents; if you are buying streetcar tickets, it is worth a full dollar. But taken all together, it works out that the dollar of today is worth seventy-eight cents compared with the dollar at the beginning of the war.

On its face, this looks bad. If the war has already shot away more than 20 per cent of the value of our money, what is going to happen if the war lasts another year or two? That is a question which nobody but a fool would try to answer flatly and finally. To make even an intelligent guess is not easy. The best brains in the business and academic worlds, as well as in the government, have been racked by the effort, because a tremendous number of factors have to be taken into consideration and each must be given its due weight.

At that, the situation is not all uncertainty. Knowing what happened in other wars, and knowing what has happened so far in this one, we may make a guess at the future that is not altogether blind.

To begin with, we know that on every occasion when the country has engaged in a big war the dollar has suffered some damage. It is easy to see why. The dollar is the measure of prices, and prices, in a free economy, depend on supply and demand. When goods are plentiful and buyers few, the price usually goes down, which is another way of saying that the dollar goes up. When goods are scarce and buyers plentiful, up goes the price—or down goes the dollar.

War inevitably brings the second condition. When the farmer abandons his plow, the shoemaker his last, the mechanic his tools to go out to war, fewer goods are made. Nor is that all. Not every farmer, shoemaker, and mechanic joins the Army, but many of those who are left must turn to and make weapons and ammunition. They are paid and the soldiers are paid, but not for making goods that can be used by civilians. Thus the country presently finds itself with more money than goods, and, if nature is allowed to take its course, the money becomes progressively less valuable.

Economists call this condition inflation. But what the word means to the ordinary man is that part of the former value of his dollar has disappeared.

In former wars nature was allowed to take its course with almost no deliberate interference. What happened? The Revolutionary War shot sixty-seven cents out of every dollar. (To be precise, it was eightpence out of every shilling, since the colonists didn't have dollars; but the monetary unit lost two thirds of the value it had in 1775.) The Civil War shot fifty-six cents out of every dollar; the first World War, sixty cents. If it is remembered

that the inflationary trend of the first World War began long before we entered the fighting, all these wars were of pretty much the same length.

In this war, too, the trend to inflation began long before Pearl Harbor. From 1939 on, hundreds of thousands of our workers were making war goods, and from 1940 vast numbers were leaving field and factory for Army cantonments. It is fair to say, therefore, that the pressure toward inflation has been increasing since 1939. Yet sixty months after its outbreak the present war has shot only twenty-two cents out of our dollar. More than that, ten cents of this went before the Pearl Harbor attack, when we were still letting nature take its course.

How did this happen? Well, there is already a large shelf of books explaining how it happened, and before it is all over there will probably be a whole library of explanations. But it may be summed up in the statement that we laid violent hands on our economic system and forced it out of its natural course into another that suited us better.

You've helped by paying old debts . . .

Americans are a peace-loving and a liberty-loving people, but they happen to be a pretty sensible people, too—sensible enough to realize that if we can't have peace we can't have entire freedom, either. It was Hitler's belief that democracy is incapable of self-discipline. It was beyond his credulity that a free-born American citizen would submit to the regimentation necessary to win a great war, and that's where he made his mistake. The American citizen has submitted so readily that with inflationary pressure incomparably greater than ever before, the American dollar has actually lost much less of its prewar value than it lost in any other international collision.

But this is excellent, this is encouraging, this is as good news as the winning of a great battle! To whom do we owe our thanks? Who did it?

Go around Washington asking that question and you will get a bewildering variety of answers, some of them true, some of them false, but all of them complicated. Fred M. Vinson, director of the Office of Economic Stabilization, has explicitly refused credit for doing more than supervising the work of many others. The Office of Price Administration had a hand in it, of course, but so did the War Labor Board, the Federal Reserve Board, the Treasury, the Office of War Information, nearly all the big departments and many others, all of whom received their authority through the President from Congress.

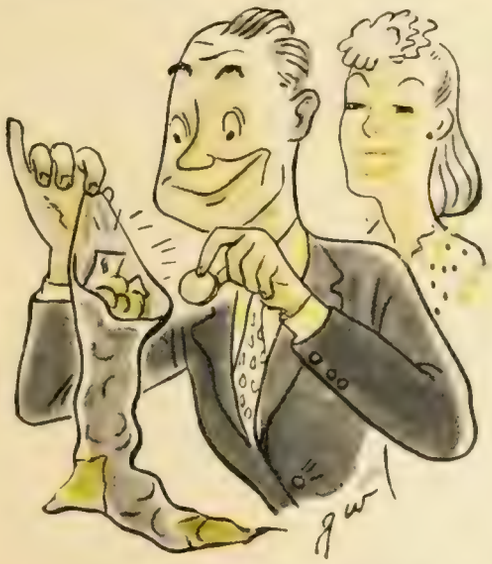
An official of the Federal Reserve Board expressed an interesting point of view. "The bulk of the credit doesn't belong to anyone here in Washington," he said. "It goes to thousands of men and women you never heard of.

"Inflation results from a huge demand for goods with a scanty supply to meet it. Until the war is over, there is not much we can do toward increasing the supply, so our only hope was to hold down the demand within the bounds of reason.

"To accomplish that we have used four main methods: taxes, savings, price control, and wage control. Taxes are levied by Congress and collected by government officials. But the other methods were merely devised here; the actual application in large part was made locally by local people, most of them unpaid volunteers. Savings include war bonds, sold by volunteers. Price control includes rationing, administered by local boards. Those local groups, all over the country—rationing boards, draft boards, war bond committees, and many others—they are the people who have done the dirty work and have received most of the kicks and the cussing. They are the people who ought to get the bulk of the credit."

Granting that we have done pretty well so far, how long can we keep it up?

This is the most important and also the most difficult of all questions relating to the control of inflation. It is a fight, but wholly a defensive fight. We are trying, not to make advances, but to hold the line. Therefore all we have done so far can be lost the instant the line breaks. We might be successful up to the very last day of the war and then lose everything. To win, we must hold not only while the fighting continues, but also until some, at least, of the factories now making war goods are reconverted and ready to turn out peace goods to supply the demand now being held back. When supply is approximately equal to demand, prices neither rise nor fall and the dollar remains steady.



. . . tucking away a lot in the old sock . . .

Operating against our chance of holding on are three powerful forces. One is the magnitude of the shift to war production. In the first World War about one fourth of our total productive capacity was devoted to war work; today more than half has been converted, which means that the pressure toward inflation is twice as great—probably more than twice, since such pressures tend to increase in more than simple arithmetical progression.

The second adverse circumstance is the determination of certain pressure groups to improve their position regardless of the effect on the nation as a whole. Hitler counted on this to be decisive. He thought that the greed and shortsightedness of organized groups would wreck all efforts to control the situation. He was wrong, but not altogether wrong. Pressure groups have complicated the situation enormously, and it is quite possible that they may yet wreck the whole program.

The third ominous factor is sheer fatigue. Millions of words have been written about the miracle of our war production, but we have somewhat lost sight of the fact that we have performed a miracle of peace production at the same time. With half of all our facilities turned to war production, the other half has worked so mightily that it has turned out enough goods to maintain the American standard of living almost exactly at the level of 1941, which was the highest level ever attained. But the war is now dragging through its third year and both men and machines are getting pretty badly worn.

ON the other side of the scale are two factors working in our favor. One is the increasing effectiveness of the controls as experience teaches us how to handle them. Consider, for example, the field in which price control has been least effective, that of food prices. Food prices are particularly hard to control because they are geared to the principle of parity. The prices of farm products cannot be touched until they reach parity, which means that when other prices go up, farm prices must be allowed to rise accordingly.

In the sixty months following the outbreak of the war, food prices rose 47 per cent. During a similar period in the first World War they increased 67.5 per cent, but our present figure is bad enough. Here, however, is the significant fact: of the total increase this time, more than three fourths occurred before the present controls were applied. Since the establishment of OPA, food prices have increased only 13 per cent, and from April, 1943, when President Roosevelt issued his hold-the-line order, to August, 1944, retail food prices actually declined 2.1 per cent. In other words, the rise has been progressively slowed down until now it has been practically halted.

Something of the sort applies to other prices. Steel plates for tanks, for example, have not increased at all, nor has plate glass. Industrial commodities in general have increased in price only 23.1 per cent, which is appreciably less than the over-all increase in the cost of living. In brief, the

(*Continued on page 62*)

. . . putting $25,000,000,000 into bonds.

THE END OF HERR GENERAL

The Führer had commanded. A single elusive idea could smash England—but an old wrong was waiting to destroy the destroyers

Liberty's SHORT SHORT STORY

BY KEN W. PURDY

ILLUSTRATED BY RAFAEL DESOTO

RUDOLF BERNST stared sourly out of the window. The train was nearing Meissen, and he found the bleak, monotonously flat landscape thoroughly depressing. Still, he thought wryly, anything was better than the country around Hamburg. It made no difference anyway. He wouldn't be out-of-doors much. This assignment was one of those jolly little soul-crunchers that went ". . . and the Führer has expressly commanded an immediate solution to the problem involved." Bernst had been in on those before. They were not pleasant.

There was an Opel at the station with a corporal driver. The laboratory was a dozen miles outside town, stiff with guards and incredibly camouflaged.

Mayerbach was waiting inside, and he sat down for a cigarette after he'd shown Bernst to his rooms.

"I understand there was a little noise in Duisburg last night," he said. "Were you there?"

"Sure," Bernst told him. "I was there all right."

"How was it?"

"Depends on your point of view. There was nine-ten cloud all over the place, and at one fifteen a bunch of British heavies came over at twenty-five thousand and plastered the Anhalt plant. They dumped it all into that one area—about eight blocks square."

Mayerbach took a long pull at his cigarette, scowling at the taste of it. "Wonderful thing, radar," he said bitterly.

Bernst looked up at the ceiling. He couldn't see the ventilation ducts, but he could hear the air sighing softly through them. There were no windows in the room. He put out his cigarette.

"So what have we got here?" he asked Mayerbach. "What's it about this time?"

"The HE-297," Mayerbach said. "Or V-1, if you like. The robot. You know it turned out better than we thought it would. The things are raising hell in England. But they aren't big enough, and they don't carry far enough."

"They were meant for the invasion, weren't they?" Bernst asked him.

"Sure. But you know what happened there. So it was decided to throw them into London while we still had the area Le Havre-Calais to throw them from."

Mayerbach looked up at a slow knock on the door. "Come in," he said. "Probably your bags," he told Bernst. The door opened and a short but powerfully built man shuffled in with the luggage. A heavy scar, wide and red, although long healed, stood out over his right eye and ran up past the hairline. His face was sodden, doltish, and his eyes were dull

"Anyway," Mayerbach was saying, "the idea now is to get the weight up to fifteen thousand kilos and the range—"

"Wait a minute," Bernst broke in. "Who was that? What kind of apparition was he?"

Mayerbach laughed. "I forgot. I should have told you before he came in. He's an ex-sergeant, an artilleryman out of the old Three Hundred and Second Bavarian. He is a Jew, and he got into a little trouble, as you can see by his face. We keep him around to do odd jobs and because he's good for a laugh now and then. Horchardt calls him 'Herr General.'"

Bernst was still blinking. "I still don't see how you can do it," he said. "Not here. It's in violation of every security regulation I ever heard of."

"Sure, I know it is," Mayerbach said. "But it was Horchardt's idea, and the old man can get anything he wants, you know—including a Jew for a court fool. Anyway, the fellow's harmless. He's a drooling idiot. He can't even talk."

"Couldn't he be faking?"

"Not a chance. Horchardt gave him all the tests, X-ray and everything else. He did some time in Dachau, and he's got an occipital something or other."

"The boys made a Christian out of him, eh?"

Mayerbach laughed. "Not quite," he said, "but damned close to it."

Herr Doktor Walther Horchardt was sixty-three years old, a tall angular specimen who richly deserved the reputation that had come to him. For four decades he had made the origination and perfection of engines of war his business, and he knew his business superbly well. For Bernst's benefit, he stated the problem succinctly.

"In the first place," he said, "it is impossible to overemphasize the urgency of this matter. We find ourselves in possession of a weapon which may very well reverse the whole course of the war. That is entirely possible. But the weapon is primitive and it is weak. The normal development of years must be compressed into weeks. Otherwise the British will devise the inevitable countermeasure before we have a chance to put the weapon to fully effective use."

"There are no really good defenses so far, are there?" Bernst asked.

Horchardt was emphatic. "Absolutely none," he said. "The robot is an extremely difficult target for flak. Nothing but a direct hit will explode it in the air, and anything else will merely bring it down, which is what would happen in any case. Same thing with fighter planes. They can knock the motor off, in which case it will fall and explode. If they get close enough to explode it with gunfire, the blast will destroy them."

"A very brilliant conception," Bernst murmured. "A beautiful thing indeed."

"Precisely," the Herr Doktor agreed. "But it isn't big enough. It must carry fifteen thousand kilos, not twelve hundred. It must have a range of five hundred kilometers, not one eighty-five. Then we can literally blow London to pieces. We can gut the whole of the British Isles!" Excitement rose in his voice. "We can put ourselves once more on the road to winning the war, and we can do it in a matter of weeks!" He broke off as the Jew came into the room, walking slowly under a heavy wooden case. "You hear that, Herr General?" he said softly. "We're going to blow England off the map, and all the Jews on the whole damned island will go with it!" The Jew walked on. He did not turn his head. He did not understand, he did not hear, or he didn't care. Bernst couldn't tell which.

Horchardt turned back to him. "At any rate," he said, "the basic problem is propulsion. The impulse-reaction motor we're using now won't do. Make it big enough to move fifteen thousand kilos and its fuel consumption rises out of all proportion. It's impossible. The V-1s burn a gallon a mile as it is. We need something new. Rockets, at the present level of development—out. Gas turbine, maybe. Jet propulsion, maybe. We don't know. But we need to know damned soon."

BERNST had been sure of what he was getting into, but it was worse than he had anticipated.

For seven days and most of seven nights he had poured every ounce of energy he could summon up into one line of attack: Steuben's adaptation of the original Whittle jet-propulsion engine. He was absolutely convinced—and so was Horchardt—that the Steuben engine was the answer—if the weight of fuel could somehow be reduced by one third. And he had absolutely failed to reduce it.

He looked at his watch. It was 1.30—P. M., he guessed. He walked over and turned on a faucet. He was running the cold water over his wrists when Horchardt came in.

"Well? Well? Anything?" Horchardt grunted.

Bernst didn't look up. "Nothing, Herr Doktor," he replied. "Dead end."

"There's no such thing as a dead end!" Horchardt snapped. "A miserable one-third reduction! If it were three quarters, we'd have something to cry about." He shook his head impatiently. "What in hell are you doing there with the water?"

Bernst looked up sardonically. "It's a little theory of mine," he said. "The cold water contracts the arteries, the blood pressure goes up, bells ring and whistles sound. Besides, it feels good."

Horchardt glared at him. "You're drunk," he said. "For real results, you ought to stick your head in a pail of cracked ice and—" He stopped suddenly and his eyes

The door opened and a short but powerfully built man shuffled in with the luggage. His face was sodden, doltish, and his eyes were dull.

bulged. *"Herr Gott!"* he said softly. *"Herr Gott,* that's it, that's it!"

Bernst stared stupidly. "What's it?" he asked. "What's ice got to do with it?"

"Not ice! Not ice!" Horchardt said, "but the idea. I tell you, I have the whole damned answer! Come on down to the model room and I'll show you."

He charged out the door and Bernst ran after him. The old man had rounded the turn in the corridor just ahead of him when Bernst heard the crash. He got there in time to see Horchardt picking himself up off the floor. Herr General was standing there, his glazed eyes fixed on the mop pail Horchardt had tripped over.

"You damned idiot!" Horchardt shouted. He drew back a bony fist clumsily, like a girl, and smashed the Jew full in the mouth. "You fool!" he screamed.

Herr General's mouth dropped open and his teeth came bare. His shoulders hunched and his hands opened into hooks. For a full second Bernst was too horrified to move. Then he shouted, "Guard! Guard! Guard!" at the top of his voice and threw himself forward. The Jew took one hand off Horchardt's throat and knocked Bernst senseless. He was still methodically beating Horchardt's brains out on the tiled floor when they shot him.

An hour later Bernst wandered back into his laboratory. The water was still running in the sink. He went over and shut it off.

"It adds up to nothing," he said to himself. "Ice. Ice. I don't see any connection at all."

THE END

PULCHRITUDE by PARCEL POST

BY JULIET BRIDGMAN

You clip a coupon, you pay your money, you work like a mule—and the next thing you know you're beautiful. Charm-by-mail is a million-dollar business

IN recent years the correspondence course has risen to such heights of popularity that it is now practically a national institution. In six easy lessons one can learn anything from how to play the bagpipes by ear to the technique of training a seal in the front parlor.

It is also possible to acquire glamor, self-confidence, elegance, eloquence, magnetism, and a svelte chassis via the mails. Advertisements proclaim that the transformation from Before to After is speedy, painless, exhilarating, and thorough. A project worthy of investigation.

To look pretty in public, exercise in private.

There are two major glamor mills operating mail-order courses, both headquartered in New York City. One is the DuBarry Success School, formerly known as the DuBarry Debutante School. It is under the supervision of Miss Ann Delafield and has been offering a correspondence course since 1940. The other is the John Robert Powers School. Its home course, since its inception in February, 1943, has been guided by Miss Grace Eden.

Both these ladies are models of charm, beauty, glamor, and correct posture. Both have implicit faith in their own methods of bestowing beauty, and both have thousands of testimonials from their students, past and present. The essential aims of the two institutions are similar, but the approach to beauty and the methods of teaching are, to a great extent, dissimilar.

The home courses of both these organizations grew out of already established schools, and the correspondence courses are closely patterned after the regular classes. The DuBarry Success School stresses fitness, figure, posture through exercise, and a radiant complexion. The John Robert Powers School is based on the model technique. The principle is that a Powers model isn't necessarily beautiful; she just knows how to put her best foot forward without appearing to work at it. So the Powers Home Course emphasizes savoir-faire, poise, correct choice of wardrobe, coiffure, and colors, as well as the streamlining of the body beautiful.

Here's what happens once you've decided to take steps toward remodeling yourself and become the New You. First, the DuBarry way.

The first exercise is to clip a coupon from an advertisement and mail it to the school. This is your way of announcing that you are prepared to welcome beauty. By return mail, if not sooner, you receive a batch of congratulatory literature. Thereupon you dispatch $22.50 in an envelope provided for the purpose and you are all set to embark upon the great adventure of discovering what you can really be.

As Miss Delafield points out rather wistfully, "Women don't get what they deserve in life; they only get what they *look* like they deserve." With this in mind, you'd probably be willing to face a seven-day diet of crumbs and vapor with stalwart determination. But it isn't as bad as all that, you'll soon be delighted to find.

The DuBarry Home Course covers a period of six weeks and is divided into six mailings of six lessons each, one for every day of the week. Each week a white 8-by-11 envelope arrives, numbered in order of its appearance. Almost all the mailing is parcel post (this applies to the Powers course, too), presumably for reasons of economy.

The daily assignments, from First Lesson, First Week, to Sixth Lesson, Sixth Week, are printed on heavy white posterlike sheets, 15 by 20, folded twice. The folders are designed in pink, black, and white, and both sides of the paper are covered with gay slogans and admonitions. Each remark and each exercise is illustrated with little brush-point drawings, reducing the likelihood of confusion in, say, "turning your coccyx away from the wall (under you)."

The first week's batch of six folders is accompanied by the Sunday Special, prescribing a beauty ritual to be followed on all Sundays *all* your life. The Special assumes that you have more time to devote to beauty on Sunday than you have on weekdays, and also that there is a lock on your door to safeguard you from the prying eyes of husband, father, mother, and kid brother. You can't do justice to the business of glamorizing yourself in the presence of a grinning audience.

For the rest, the thirty-six-lesson course prescribes a different assignment, different exercises, and varying beauty hints for each day, until being beautiful becomes the most natural thing in the world. Great emphasis is put on posture and on using the right lotions, skin fresheners, creams, powders, cleansers, and sundry facial preparations, ten dollars' worth of which are given with the course. Thus the first lesson starts with a brisk account of the advantages of Standing Without Strain! and Sitting Without Sag! The rest of the folder is devoted to admonishing the new student to "Put away all the creams and lotions you now have and use only DuBarry." The DuBarry cosmetics are a Hudnut product.

During the next six weeks you stretch and bend and roll on the floor. You spank away ungainly fat. You regard every threshold through which you pass as a grand entrance, even if you're just stepping into the broom closet to get the mop. Toward the end of the second week you are told that "Some men say that women haven't a SENSE OF HUMOR (We don't believe them, do we?). . . . It certainly takes a sense of humor for a woman to work faithfully and religiously at this course to perfect her body. . . ."

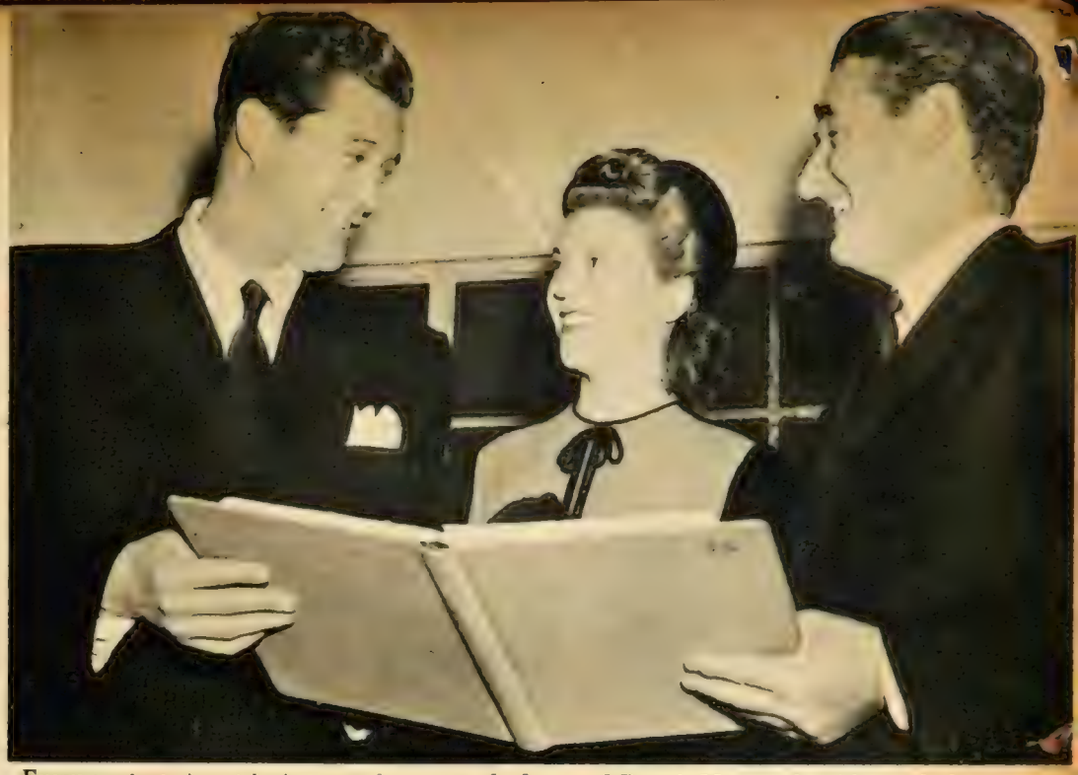
Meanwhile you are subsisting on the Beauty Building Bill of Fare, a special diet devised by Miss Delafield, who is an accredited dietitian, among many other

Lying in the beauty angle will make you witty and beautiful.

CARTOONS BY AL ROSS

things. This diet is strictly individualized. If you are trying to gain weight, you get one B. B. Bill of Fare; if you are trying to reduce, you get another.

The Beauty Angle Position is something else you'll confront early in your adventure. The principle of the beauty angle is to offset the ravages of gravity. Gravity is constantly at work on you with devastating effect, pulling the blood from your face and attracting it to the general region of the ankles. Gravity is directly responsible for the sagging abdomen and for the invention of the bra. Lying in the beauty angle for half an hour a day, however, fools gravity into working *for* you instead of against you. Your legs and hips are propped up on anything handy, an ironing board, a cellar door, or even the washbasin in the bathroom—just anything, so long as your head and shoulders are about two feet lower than the rest of you.

All sorts of wonderful things come of lying around in the beauty angle. You get to be witty, you dazzle the boss (not because you lie around that way at the office, of course), and you acquire new radiance of complexion. Reading while in the beauty angle is highly recommended, especially the reading of good books. Ac-

Every graduate is not lucky enough to meet the boss and Dennis Morgan, but it's worth the try.

Posture prescription: Straighten out with a good book.

cording to the DuBarry home course, anything can happen under the combined influence of the flow of blood and good literature to the brain.

To date, more than 150,000 women and girls have undergone the transformation of the DuBarry home course. Multiply that figure by $22.50, the fee per course, and you get $3,375,000. Add to that the proceeds from the DuBarry products, and you're talking big business.

As Miss Delafield is wont to point out: "People are so *wrong* when they say that beauty is only skin deep!"

WHEN John Robert Powers became renowned as the Man Who Has Created More Glamorous Gals Than Anybody Else Ever, women of every description flocked to his doors. The plea most frequently heard was "I don't want to be a model; I just want to look like one." So great was the pressure that Mr. Powers opened a school and began to teach his army of followers the secret of glamor in ten weeks —at $200 a throw.

The school became a success practically overnight. At first the faculty was made up largely of Powers models, but soon professional mentors of physical education, elocution, and other specialized subjects found their way into the fold. Students received daily private lessons in exercise, grooming, walking, speech, styles, and diet.

A graduate could waft into a roomful of people radiating self-assurance, her clothes, accessories, and coiffure a study in perfection, her movements and behavior likewise, her answer to polite observations about the weather a well-modulated "Realleh?" instead of "Zat so?"

Only a matter of weeks after the school got under way, letters began pouring in, and again Mr. Powers succumbed to mass demand. The John Robert Powers Home Course was born.

Under Miss Eden's direction, the members of the faculty wrote up in lecture form the instructions each had been giving to private students. A system for individualization was devised. A loose-leaf, 11½-by-9-inch book was designed, complete with drawings, lectures, photographs, charts, and diets. During the first six months of operation the Powers Home Course had to move three times to accommodate the rising tide of filing cabinets. Fortunately all the moving was done in the same building.

It takes a week longer to acquire glamor by mail the Powers way. The home course covers a period of seven weeks, divided into three installments. The first covers two weeks, the second three weeks, and the third another two weeks. The price is twenty-five dollars, or, if you wish, you may pay in three installments of nine dollars apiece.

Individualization and personalized service are the watchwords of the Powers home course. Students are urged to correspond with the school for information on individual problems that arise during the course. They all get answers, too. This has brought on a lot of overtime work for the faculty. One woman wrote fifteen letters, and some of her questions perplexed the faculty until she explained that her husband was taking the course with her—exercises and all. Did him no end of good, she said.

One of the features of the Powers home course is called the photo revise. Early in the course the student sends in a full-face portrait. An artist and a specialist in make-up and coiffure trace the photo on a sheet of heavy transparent paper, analyze the drawing, and sketch in the revise. A new hair-do, with the part in the proper place, is first applied. Dotted lines show exactly where cheek rouge should be to obtain the best results. The lip line may be rearranged, and improvements made in eyebrows, lashes, and other features. The original photo and the revise, along with a detailed color chart, are then sent back to the pupil, who goes to work revising herself accordingly. When she comes down to breakfast next morning, her husband looks up from his paper and exclaims, "Is that you, Mabel?" After that he doesn't read at the breakfast table.

WHEN wartime restrictions have ceased, the school hopes to incorporate a voice revise into the home course, using recordings. Meanwhile the faculty improves the students' speech with special voice and tone exercises. Standing before a mirror and remembering that resonance springs *from* the diaphragm, *through* the throat, and *to* the mouth, the student enunciates, "Many a wit is not a whit wittier than Whittier," or "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!" After a few days' practice the students find themselves able to rattle off "Nathaniel Doolittle rapidly whittled toothpicks" without the aid of a napkin.

The course winds up with a personal chat from Mr. Powers entitled You Become You. In it he points out that just having the attributes of external attractiveness is not enough for the modern woman. She must also have bearing, consideration for others, an inquiring mind, individuality, genuine interests, and many other characteristics designed to lend her beauty a more profound note. He adds, in conclusion:

"I don't have to say Good Luck, because the charming, attractive woman gets the GOOD without having to bother with the LUCK."

One might go a step further than Mr. Powers. A charming, attractive woman has an iron will, stamina, and fortitude. Otherwise she wouldn't be what she is. Being beautiful is a full-time job and requires the self-denial of a martyr. A beautiful woman *deserves* all the best things in life.

THE END

Chuck pushed ahead, half dragging Millie. He knew they had to reach shelter and he wondered if they'd give out before they made it.

THE VIRTUE OF MILLIE LATIMER

BY CLEVE CARTMILL

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN JONES

SPEAKING of shotgun weddings, Homer Latimer was a hard man, but just, and honest as a sun dial. And Chuck Baker was no good. You could ask anybody in town, they'd tell you that.

Depending on who was telling it, you'd maybe hear about when Sam Dilbey short-changed Homer four cents, and how Homer bought all his clothes by mail from then on; or about Homer toting Sarah Williams' trunk three miles on his back in the dead of summer when his express truck broke down, just because he'd told her he'd deliver it by two o'clock.

Some folks figured Homer thought the Latimers were better than anybody else, account of he wouldn't let Millie go out alone with any boy, even Monk Bowles from next door. She could go to parties, but Homer delivered her and he came back to fetch her at nine o'clock. Boys could call on her, too, but they got sent home at nine.

So people thought Homer was a mite hoity-toity.

Other things, too, helped that feeling. Homer read books, and he made Millie read. Homer talked like a member of the school board. Which he was, all right, but people thought he didn't need to talk like one. Gus Hatch was a member, too, but he was common as dirt. Gus would pass a remark with anybody, but Homer would just nod.

Still, there was this other side that caused people to admire him. Even if he was white-haired, he had fun with Millie, who was sixteen, going on seventeen. He took her with him to the state capital twice a year. And he would joke and laugh with her, even on the public street.

Everybody agreed he was stern, all right, but he was a good father. Nobody knew what kind of husband he was, because about the time Millie came, Mrs. Latimer had got out of the habit of talking.

You could get some of these things from almost anybody in town, but everybody

could tell you about Millie and Chuck Baker. Some knew how it started, and some didn't, but the way the two of them got caught in the blizzard was common knowledge. Some said for a while that Chuck was to blame, but he wasn't.

He didn't ask Millie to come by Runt's pool hall and bat her big brown eyes at him. For a while he even started ducking inside if he saw her coming.

If it was anybody's fault, it was Miss Celia Walker's. She had Millie in English literature, and she told Millie to read a book and report on it. It was a book on how a good, pure girl won the love of a rakehell and made an upstanding citizen of him. It's the book where he becomes mayor finally, and everybody thinks she's a fine woman.

Millie started to think it would be wonderful if something like that happened to her, and she thought of Chuck Baker. Not that she knew him—he was a stranger—but she knew all about him. And twenty-four to her almost seventeen wasn't really a December-May combination. Even if he was kind of old, the difference in their ages wouldn't be noticed in a few years. She liked the way his mouth curled down at the corner when he grinned.

So she went past Runt's on the way home, and smiled at him. He curled his mouth down and crinkled his gray eyes.

"Hello, little girl," he said.

Millie went on, with her skirts flouncing. Little girl! she thought. She sniffed. She'd show him, all right.

After she'd peeled the potatoes and set the table with the monogrammed silver, she sat at the front window and just stared until Homer came home. She didn't make even one phone call to her girl friends.

She took Homer's hat, asked him what brand of peroxide he was using these days, tickled his ear, and pulled out his chair. She broke in on him right after his "Amen."

"Father, do you know that Chuck Baker?"

Homer had brown eyes, too. Millie got hers from him, because Mrs. Latimer's eyes were a weak blue. He looked at her for a while, then dished up some gravy on a piece of homemade bread. "I know him, Millicent. Pass the potatoes."

"Well, what's he like?" Millie asked.

Homer worked on a pork chop for a while. Then he said, "How can anyone say what another is? It's hard enough to know oneself."

Mrs. Latimer's eyes took on a drawn, anxious expression, but she didn't say anything. She looked at Millie, thinking how pretty she was, and Mrs. Latimer remembered when she was Millie's age.

"Everybody says he's no good," Millie went on. "He mortgaged his farm, and never works. But don't you think that, underneath, he might be worth saving?"

"Every man has some good in him. Pass the biscuits."

Next day Millie went by the pool hall again. It wasn't as if she was going against her father, she told herself, but she was careful that Homer didn't see her as she walked past Runt's looking slaunchwise at Chuck.

The gang in the pool hall started deviling him. They called him lady-killer and cradle robber. Chuck just grinned, but his grin got grimmer as it came on winter, and on the day after Thanksgiving he told Curley James to shut up when Curley passed a remark about Millie.

It was about that time that Hilda Wombley and Leo Stackpole got married, and the gossip was that Old Man Wombley had more to do with the wedding coming off than Leo did. So the pool-hall gang told Chuck he'd better watch out—old Homer wouldn't let him off as easy as Leo got off, and if Chuck didn't stop standing outside when the high school let out, he'd catch pneumonia. At that, pneumonia would be better than No. 2 buckshot.

But Chuck stood on the sidewalk every day along around four, even when it was sleeting. Millie and he never talked; they just smiled and passed a hello, how are you. Chuck would look after her as she went on, seeing her slim ankles inside her galoshes; and when she turned the corner she'd flick a look back over one shoulder to see if he was still there.

It would be to her eternal credit—that was the way she put it—if she brought out the good in him. Because there must be a lot of good in a young fellow with such a strong jaw and such keen gray eyes. Yes, wherever the good marks were made, Somebody should chalk up a few for her. If she could do it.

The day she forgot to fasten one of her galoshes and it came off right in front of the pool hall, Chuck helped her with it. He went down on one knee in the snow, and she steadied herself with one hand on his shoulder, feeling like the heroine in the book, which she still read every now and then.

They had a little talk, and Chuck asked her to go skating. She said she'd ask her father, and let him know next day. If she could go, she'd take her skates to school and meet him as soon as she got out. Chuck said he'd wait at the pond for her. He didn't want the pool-hall crowd to see them.

It got to be a regular thing that he'd meet her on the pond, and the other kids skated wide around them. Millie still went on sleigh rides and to parties, but on the pond nobody butted in on her and Chuck Baker.

Millie's homework started to suffer. She'd sit in her room and stare at the wall, and she didn't eat well. Mrs. Latimer tied a bag of asafetida around her neck, which Millie took off as soon as she was outside the house, and her teachers had to tell her to stop daydreaming in class.

A little undercurrent of gossip ran around town, but none of it got back to Millie's folks. And since nothing had really happened, the mothers of Millie's girl friends still let her come over and let them visit her.

One day while they were skating by themselves on one end of the pond, Chuck said, "I want to ask you something, Millicent."

Millie braked with the heel of one skate. "What?" she asked softly. "What, Chuck?"

"Well, if it's a nice day Saturday, why don't we take a lunch and go over to Quail Creek? We could take our skates, and have the ice all to ourselves."

"I'd love to," Millie said. Then her face got cloudy. "But I don't know if I can. I'd have to tell my father a story."

"Why? Why not just tell him?"

"Oh, but I—" She broke off. This subject had never come up before, and she didn't know how to go on. "It's just that—"

Chuck helped her out. "Yeah, I know. Your old man would stop you from coming out here if he knew you were with me. Well, I can't blame him. I'm not much good, from where he stands."

"Oh, but you could be, Chuck."

Chuck curled his mouth down, but it wasn't a grin. "I do all right," he said.

"Oh," Millie said. She studied the skate marks on the ice. "Oh." After a minute, she said in a voice a little too loud, "I'll race you to the other end."

"But what about Saturday?"

Millie looked up at him. "I'll go, Chuck. I'll fix it some way."

"I'll have the lunch put up," Chuck said.

SATURDAY was a good day, cold and clear except for some clouds off to the west. They tramped across the fields, their boots crackling on the dry snow, and Chuck helped her over barbed-wire fences. They flushed a covey of bobwhite quail, and laughed at the thunder of wings.

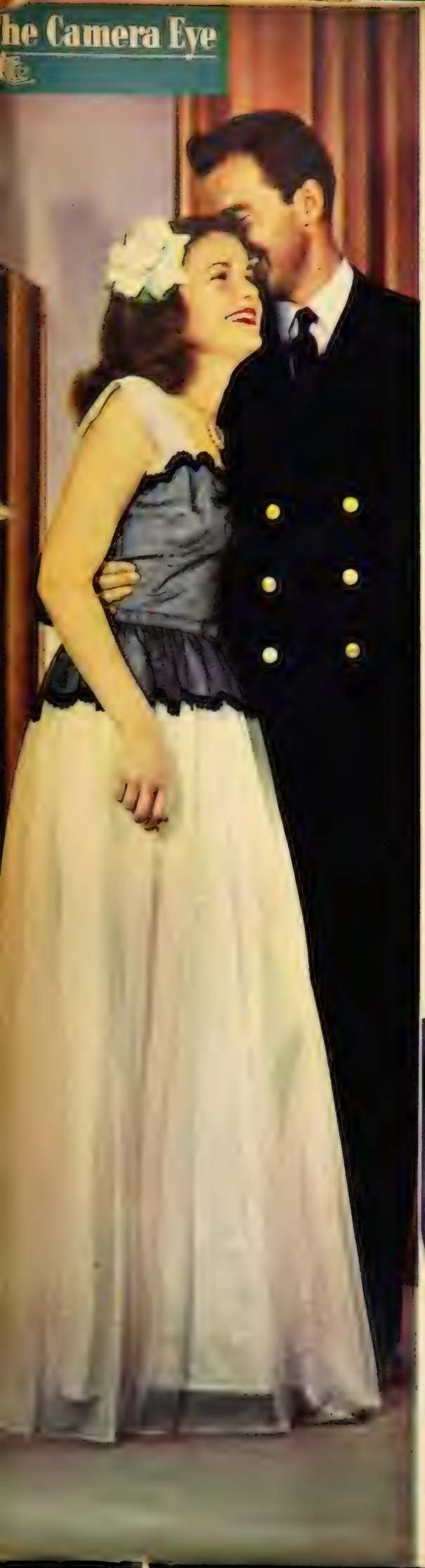
They passed the Cobley barn, used as a storehouse since Old Liz married Charley Bunbow. They saw some cows pawing snow to get at the grass below. Chuck said he'd hate to have to make a living that way.

Chuck thought Millie ought to be on a magazine cover. Her cheeks were red, her

(Continued on page 75)

Time for a shotgun, said the people of the town, and the man in the case agreed. You'd have expected Millie's father to put finger to trigger in a hurry

"I couldn't have asked for better treatment for Millicent."



Cheer-up Fashions for the Holidays

BY HELEN FAITH KEANE

AMERICAN designers are dishing up plenty of cheery-looking dresses for the holidays. Emphasis is on striking colors, glittering sequins, flashing satin stripes, and filmy, frothy glamor. Even sensible woolen dresses sparkle with mock pearls and diamonds.

LONG GLAMOR—The junior crowd never gave up long gowns, but now even the older, sophisticated set are back to them. This cream puff of lace and tulle shows an important new style trend – the peplum.

DRAMATIC STRIPES—Styles like these, hot off the griddle, help a girl look important in crowds. The peplum on the long gown and the striped hipband both express the trend to hip interest.

SUNNY CHEER—Colors like sunny yellow help create gay, sprightly gowns. Two colors in a dress make it even brighter. And a tricolor combination, like flame and emerald and lime, is tops for exciting formality.

GAY SPARKLE—For a dinner party a girl wants a dress that looks attractive across the table. These low necks are jewel-studded. Gold on black and diamond-like baguettes on the white top.

TRADITION BREAKERS—Wool jersey, formerly a strictly casual fabric, is here designed with low necklines and decorated with pearls and multicolored jewel-like stones. A great favorite with women who want a double-duty dress: warmth plus some sparkle.

DRESSES FROM JAY THORPE, N. Y. C.
Photos by Werner Schmidt

FRAMED BEAUTY—In the dressing rooms of city night clubs and hotels the picture-frame dress is seen a lot. Yokes of rich satin or fragile lace spotlight the face. A natural choice for the pleasingly plump.

SMARTNESS AT HOME—Most of us will be "at home" for our holiday celebrations. Woolen dresses like these are very practical. They're warm and can be worn to church, or to a football game, as well as to parties.

THE LIE

THEY had put him to bed almost as though it were any ordinary night, and now he lay quietly, straining his ears to pick words out of the drone of conversation that floated up through the stillness of the house. Usually he didn't bother to listen. But tonight was different. Tomorrow morning, after he left for school, his mother would drive his father to the city and his father would go away. The construction company for which his father worked was sending him across the oceans to far-off China, and there, in some remote battle-scarred valley, his father would live and work for a full year, or even longer.

The boy slipped out of bed and tiptoed down the hall. "Is that you, Frankie?" his mother called.

"Ma, I forgot to brush my teeth," he answered.

"Hurry, then. You want to be up early, to have a good breakfast with your father."

He hurried with his brushing as he'd been told, but at the head of the stairs he paused. He stepped over the loose board that creaked and sat cautiously on the top step. Then, drawing his bathrobe over his small knees, he leaned forward, cupped his chin in his two hands, and listened.

But they were only talking about Grandpa again. They talked a lot about Grandpa, and very often right out in the open. The boy had heard his mother call Grandpa a "problem." He had come to visit four years ago and he was still visiting. He was stocky and square, and his face was red and his hair a bristling white and his eyes deep set and blue. In the mornings he was one person, and in the afternoons another. The forenoon Grandpa was surly and, if he spoke at all, his voice was thick. His blue eyes were watery and a gray stubble of beard showed on his shining jowls, and sometimes his hand shook as he held a match to his pipe.

But the afternoon Grandpa, the one who sat sunning himself on the porch on pleasant days when the boy came home from school, was a new man entirely. He was shaven and clear-eyed and his talk was lively and full of quips despite his rheumatism, which was always bad during the day, and so much better in the evenings that he often managed to get downtown and stay out quite late.

Sometimes, when the boy was through playing and dinner was still cooking, he would sit on the porch steps at Grandpa's feet and listen to the story of Grandpa's life, which varied from time to time, but was always amazing. Once Grandpa had served in the Navy during World War I, and another time he had flown a flimsy Jenny for the Canadians, and once he had even been a spy behind the enemy lines.

Usually this jolly afternoon Grandpa would pause right at the most exciting part of whatever story he was telling. "From the smell of the meat in the oven," he would say, "I can tell it's not quite done. I'll have time for another bottle of beer. Bring me one from the icebox, Frankie, and you'd better go around to the back door and not through the kitchen, where your poor mother's busy with dinner."

So the boy would bring the beer and not disturb his mother and come back to hear the end of the story. By the time

The boy tiptoed his way back to bed.

BY MATT TAYLOR

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CHICKERING

his father was sighted, getting off the bus at the corner, the story was finished and the empty bottle had joined the others under Grandpa's porch chair.

Other times the boy would hear of Grandpa's later days, and the different jobs he'd held until he settled down to work behind a lathe at the automobile plant in Elkins. It was this job he had

Here is a gentle tale of a boy in a crisis. His name is Frankie and his father has just gone away

quit to pay his visit to the boy's father. He had been the best man they had in the plant and he would have been foreman or maybe a section manager if his rheumatism hadn't acted up on him just when it did.

But Grandpa was careful about talking of this fine job in Elkins. Once the boy's father had caught him bragging, and he had said, "If you were so good at it, dad, you could go back there now. From what I hear, they'll be busier than ever from now on."

At this, Grandpa sighed heavily and looked as though he might start to cry. "Come now, Danny," he said. "A man my age, and with rheumatism besides!"

"You're fifty-six," the boy's father said, "and if I played an Irish tune for you you'd get up and do a better jig than any man in town."

Grandpa smiled dreamily. "I might," he said. "I might, at that. But I'd pay for it later with sore bones."

So Grandpa kept on visiting, rocking on the porch in summers with the broadcast of the ball game coming to him through the open window, and hugging the radiator indoors in cold weather, listening to radio music that ended every few minutes so that a man could tell what horse won what race at different tracks.

The boy was glad to have Grandpa for a visitor, and he was always upset when Grandpa threatened to leave, which he did every so often. "If I'm not welcome in the home of my own son," Grandpa would say, "I'll go sleep on a park bench and be dead before morning."

"Grandpa, please!" the boy's mother said once. "You've no right to talk like that."

"Let him," the boy's father said. "Talk is all he'll ever do."

Huddled now on the top step and listening, the boy heard them go over once more the problem of Grandpa. "I wouldn't worry about anything while I'm away," he heard his father say, "if it weren't for dad imposing on you here."

"Now, Dan," his mother said, "you know I like him."

"Oh, we all like him. That's why we're so soft with him."

"But he's not much trouble."

"Why should he be *any* trouble?" his father asked angrily. "You have enough to do, with your housework and Nurses' Aid and all the rest, without waiting on him. And I won't be here to help."

"He does have rheumatism in really wet weather sometimes," his mother said.

"The only thing he has is a dry throat. He's as well able to work as anyone, and his old job in Elkins is waiting for him. He could live with Aunt Margaret, the way he used to. She's lonely without him. And she has plenty of room."

"Aunt Margaret," the boy's mother said, "never has any beer in her icebox. She wouldn't stand for it."

"I wouldn't mind so much," his father went on, "if he weren't so able and experienced. They need men like him. Wouldn't you think—"

The boy arose quietly. There wasn't any use in listening to this. He had thought his father might tell something exciting about the work he would do in China. He stepped carefully over the board that

"I told everyone you were dead," he said.

creaked, and just as he was leaving he heard his own name mentioned.

"Frankie will miss you as much as I will," his mother said.

"Yes." His father's voice was gentle. "We're pretty good friends, he and I. He'll miss me. But he'll keep it covered up. He's not the whimpering kind. He's as brave as you are."

After this they didn't talk any more, and the boy tiptoed his way back to bed. He pulled the covers tight around him. Already he felt a little lonely, but he wasn't going to show it, not even here. His father had said he wasn't the whimpering kind. He had a lot to live up to.

Breakfast the next morning was prolonged and special. But for all his father's loud talk and his mother's ready laughter, there was a tenseness about everything, and the boy wished it was over almost before it started. Then the time came for him to be off for school, and there was a sudden silence until his mother said, "Maybe you'd like to stay home today and keep Grandpa company?"

He saw his father and mother exchange a glance, and he knew what they were thinking. They were afraid he would feel so badly he'd show it. That he might even cry. He shook his head proudly. "I might as well go, just like any other day," he said.

"Good boy," his father said, nodding at him understandingly.

The boy stood staring up at his father. "Will it really be a whole year, pop?" he asked.

"It's like this, son," his father answered gravely. "A lot of places all over the world have been knocked to bits—things like roads and bridges and homes for people to live in. Someone has to patch them up again. Men like me can help that way just as much as fighting."

His hand dropped on the boy's shoulder. "Time for you to be off," he said. "Good-by, son."

The boy kissed his father good-by with dry eyes and ran down the porch steps. At the corner he turned to wave, and it was just like any other morning, except that his father was there beside his mother, his arm around her waist. The boy grinned and waved again and rounded the corner.

He walked to the parochial school with four of his special friends, and he bragged a little about his father going to China, but not too much, because they all had older brothers or uncles in service overseas. They talked ordinary small-boy talk, and when the school bell rang they raced across the playground, and it was still like any other morning.

BUT gradually it began to change. He kept watching the clock on the classroom wall and thinking of his father and what he was doing at each particular minute. The train that would take him away left at noon. He wondered what it would be like at home without his father—not having him get off his usual bus in the evenings, not hearing his jokes and teasing at the dinner table, not sharing the final half hour before bedtime with him, exchanging confidences and plans. And that made him remember all the good times he and his father had had together, and all they had planned to have during the next year.

By eleven o'clock, at recess time, it wasn't at all like any other morning. He began to wish he hadn't been so sure of himself. He should have stayed home, as his mother suggested, and kept Grandpa company. No one would see there. The dreadful possibility that he would be noticed frightened him so, that he shouted and screamed and raced around the playground all by himself until the bell rang.

The next forty minutes in the classroom were even worse. But he had a seat in the back of the room and he could slouch down in his chair and hold a book high in front of his face. When it was noon and the near-by factory whistle sounded, he pressed his lips tight together and marched out silently behind the others.

He knew he should shout and race around the playground again. But somehow he couldn't. At this very moment his father was kissing his mother good-by. His father had never been away from home a single night as long as the boy could remember. And now he'd be gone—oh, at least a year! A year seemed forever. From now till Christmas seemed forever, the boy thought. From now till next Sunday seemed forever without his father.

This was when it happened. His defenses crumbled. He was doing what his father had said he would never do—whimpering.

(Continued on page 68)

"City Family and Neighbors" painted by Rudolf Wetterau

Home

The time is coming when you can enjoy it—when you can do as you please, *when* you please, and how you please!

Boy! When that time comes, we want to be there!

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Many Kaywoodies go direct to our fighting men — please be patient if your dealer temporarily can't supply you. Illustrated here is Meerschaum-Lined Kaywoodie "Square" Shape, No. 11C — $12.50.

War Bonds come first

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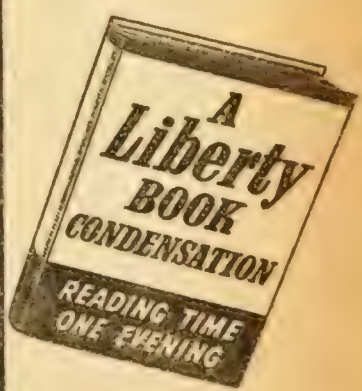
The WALSH GIRLS

Helen Walsh had a healthy appetite for life; her neurotic sister Lydia wanted to live by proxy. How Helen met this threat to her happy marriage is the theme of a story of compelling reality.

BY ELIZABETH JANEWAY

ILLUSTRATED BY GLEN THOMAS



THE train leaped out of the darkness and New York ran swiftly by on either side, cold in the harsh January light; dusty streets that the wind had blown clean and deserted, dingy red-brick tenements frozen under a lumpy sky.

The rails took up their inevitable reminiscent click. So many journeys began to this sound. It had been the background for so many landscapes, so many countries, sliding by behind the dirty glass of the windows.

But Helen didn't want to think of them now. She closed her eyes and thought of sleeping, but the quiet wouldn't come.

I'll think about Florida, she decided. I'll go back to the very beginning, two months ago, and remember what we did every day. Well, there were George and she climbing into the train Thanksgiving Day at the Hackettston station. She and George on their honeymoon. She and George! Well, if you thought about anything, all by itself like that and long enough, it seemed queer. But it was right. She could feel it in her bones. It was right.

She opened her eyes. George was hidden behind his paper. He put it down and smiled across at her. "We'll be home in six hours now," he said.

Even now, on their way home from their honeymoon, he was still raw from the years of wanting her. It had gone on for ten years—no, more—twelve, or even longer. He couldn't remember just when it began. Sometimes, after she'd come home and he'd been seeing her, he'd lie in bed and think how strange it was that for so long she'd been the center of his life, even when he thought he'd lost her forever. He might have forgotten, but he happened to have dinner with her sister Lydia one night, and Lydia read him one of Helen's letters. And then somehow it got to be almost a weekly affair, that dinner, and the letter. And even that was enough of Helen to make every other woman shadowy and imitation. He hadn't even been reading the paper he had up in front

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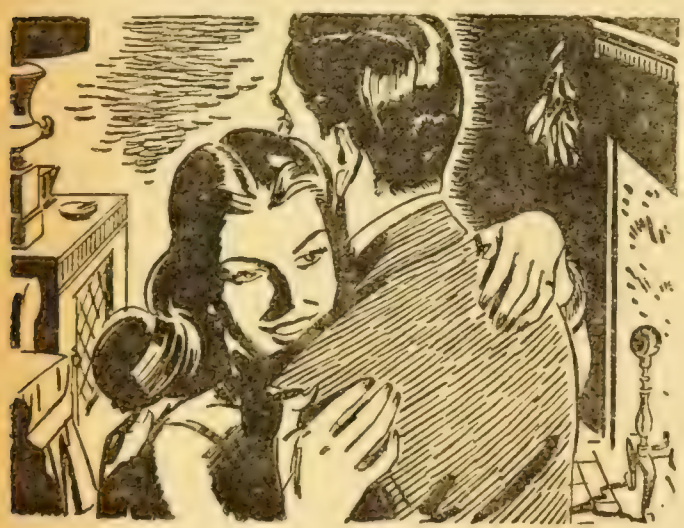
of him. The unbelievable fact that she was his got in the way of the news.

But he mustn't sit and smile at her like a donkey and not say anything. "There'll be a lot for you to do, fixing up the house," he said. "You change everything around the way you want it. Not that I expect you'll be nothing but a housekeeper," he added quickly, because there had been something in her face—for just a minute. "You'll find a lot to do. The church has social work and so on. That would be interesting."

"Yes," she said decorously, without smiling. She mustn't smile. Lord knows, she thought, I don't want to be a sophisticated returned European—but it was just such an effort. You're Mrs. George Peterson, she told herself, and your husband is a fairly well-to-do furniture manufacturer, and you're coming home from your honeymoon to do church work. "I used to be a Socialist," she almost said to George, but it would have startled him; besides, before that and for longer, she used to be a minister's daughter, and church work was certainly



no mystery. She kept still and closed her eyes. And then suddenly she was asleep.

George watched her. Her short thick lashes were very dark. Her face looked so young. He knew his heart would move a little when she opened her eyes, that he would never be really free of her.

All afternoon the train hurried on. It was almost dark at four o'clock, and Helen shuddered at the thought of the cold that would greet them as they got out.

The train was slowing. The conductor opened the door, and the porter loaded himself with their bags. It was only a moment before they were out of the car, deposited on the ragged board station with their suitcases around them. The cold air was a pain in her lungs.

"I'll go get a taxi," said George. "You stay here." Helen shivered. To the far south, where they had come from, there were palms, summer, fringing the coast. And to the east—to the east she saw the gray sea; Europe reaching out, stretched toward her like a groping hand, anxious to clasp something—herself—in its palm. To break her—as Demmy, her first husband, had been broken.

She mustn't think of that. She mustn't let horror touch her. It was over. It was past. It could not be true. Why was George taking so long? She wanted him there, for his very presence would protect her against the ghosts that walked in this chill.

Then across the parking lot she saw the taxi rattling toward her with George on the running board. It stopped with a clatter and stood shivering, while Helen and the bags were packed in.

The town unraveled around them. There was hardly a car on the street, and only by the movie house did they see more than one or two people at a time. They panted up the hill and turned into Elm Street. They were home.

Overhead came the sound of Nancy's door opening—Nancy, who had been George's housekeeper for years, crying out at seeing him. Their footsteps were on the steps now, on the threshold of the house. How lovely it was to be home at last! Oh, it would be fun to have a whole house to play with, to change and shift around! George picked her right up off the floor as they came in and kissed her in front of Nancy. They sat in front of the fire and had a cocktail to warm them up while Nancy went off to start dinner.

OUTSIDE, the night blew on. The first feathery flakes of snow sifted down as Lydia Walsh went into her kitchen to make herself an early supper. Her classes—she taught English at the Hackettston High School—had finished early today, and her students' themes lay, neatly graded, on her desk. She felt free to admit she was a little excited. Helen and George were home. She was going over in a little while to welcome them home. Mr. and Mrs. George Peterson!

She stopped for a second, put down the pan she was holding, while a pain stabbed her side. Helen was her sister—her little sister whom she loved very dearly. George was—George was an old friend. Her mouth twisted as she whispered this truth.

Then her supper was ready and she carried it into the dining room. It was absurd, the whole town said, for Lydia Walsh to go on living all by herself in the big empty house that had been her father's. But Lydia loved it and tried to forget the thing that had been nagging at her lately, that mortgage hanging over her head. She wouldn't think of that now, she told herself. Soon, when she could find the courage, she would tell George about it and he would find a way out for her. She switched out the light firmly and went out to the kitchen.

The wind came past the house like a solid moving wall when she left at last. She huddled her shoulders high and went down the steps.

She had to go three blocks to the right and then seven to the left, and then to the right again. Halfway down that block George's house—Helen's house—stood. But that was too far ahead to think.

She was running now, as much away from her thoughts as from the storm. She could have gone on with the wind at her back forever perhaps, but something familiar about a house swung her around a corner, and a memory awoke in her lost mind. It was a face. The face of a man, ruddy and strong, bending to talk to her. She dug her way into the wind up the street, nearer and nearer to it. It bent closer. Just before it touched hers, it acquired a name. George. Then she was turning up a path toward long patches of light that lay warm in the windows of the house that awaited her. She was in the porch, in the shelter of the house. She rang the bell.

She rang the bell, and Helen started, pulling herself erect in George's arms. "Who the devil is that?" he said.

"It might be Lydia. I thought she might come over, but on a night like this—" Her voice trailed back as she went out to open the door. "Hello, darling!" she cried suddenly.

George stood up wearily. He was tired as hell. Wouldn't you think she'd realize they'd both be tired? But that was an old maid for you. He didn't give a damn that he and Lydia had known each other for years or that she was Helen's sister. He wanted to swear. She's getting a little queer, he thought, the way they do, schoolteachers, old maids.

"Hello, Lydia," he called. "How are you? How's the old town?"

"Did you have a grand—" said Lydia, and they stopped and looked at each other, and it was all to do over again.

In that minute the doorbell rang again. "Hey," said George, getting up, "what is this—a party?" and he went stamping out to open the door. Inside, it sounded as if a crowd were pushing into the hall.

Helen closed her eyes, listening to the voices. In just a minute she would get up and go out and kiss Peggy Gilmore and Alice Parker and make them all welcome. And she'd forget the lassitude that held her now, forget to be tired, as she always did in the excitement of any gathering, however small. But now—how queer they sounded! How stupid! She listened a second longer to Charlie Jennings explaining that he had to take off his

galoshes at once or else he'd get a sore throat, and then she stood up, ready for the party. Lydia was standing too. Helen thought in a flash, Why is she so tense? What makes her brace herself like that? Can't she relax and be amused? But of course Lydia could not.

They all came in, and Helen disposed them around the room, sending Harry Parker out to help George make some highballs, propelling Charlie Jennings, the unmarried man, over to talk to Lydia, and trying not to listen as Preston Gilmore, who was manager of the First National Bank, grumbled about the President. He sounded as if he thought Franklin D. Roosevelt had personally engineered the storm and wind that still made his ears sting as he came into the warm room. Is this what's going to happen to me? she thought. It would be so easy to drift back into Hackettston's stagnation and lose every vestige of what she had had of the world. Was this why she had married George? His arms had seemed like salvation and the promise of peace.

George came back carrying a tray, and just his presence brought her back again. Voices she had not heard were loud in her ears.

"Well," Peggy was saying cheerfully, "do you want to tell all about Florida first, or do you want to hear the dirt?"

"Oh, make her tell!" said Alice. "I'm dying to hear about it. They're wearing white bathing suits, aren't they? Just bras and panties? Goodness! But they must be smart on the right people. But Helen, listen—"

Behind her voice the men's conversation went on, a bass accompaniment. Helen felt boredom creeping over her again.

Suddenly she saw Lydia's face, and her thoughts swerved sharply back again. Helen knew that look, resentment and frustration all mixed up together. Oh, Lord, is she going to be difficult again? she thought, as her sister got up. With a sinking heart she remembered how possessive Lydia was, how she resented other people coming between them. And it was a long time now since they had been close to each other.

"I'd better go home," Lydia was saying. "I just meant to drop in for a minute. I didn't expect a party."

"Now, Lyddy, you aren't going to walk home! I won't let you. Why not stay here all night? There's loads of room, and then I won't have to worry about you."

Lydia didn't bother to say why not. She just smiled gently at the idea. Then she tensed as Charlie stood up. "May I take you home, Miss Lydia?" he said.

Both women turned to stare at him, Helen in dawning amusement, Lydia with eyes that held something like fear. Charlie blushed.

"Oh, no, thank you; please don't bother," said Lydia, her voice agitated. "After all, I walked over."

Helen said quickly, before Charlie could withdraw, "All the more reason why you shouldn't walk back."

Lydia looked around desperately, but there was no opening for escape. This foolish little man everyone thought such a bore. Just because they were the two unmarried people there, he was taking her home. Her fury and shame burned up in her as she pinned her coat at the throat and went to the door.

Helen stood at the door looking after them as they went down to the car. Then she heard steps behind her and she sighed, relaxing, as she felt the arms of her husband, the man who held her heart, go around her.

IT was after eleven o'clock the next morning before Helen finally woke up. She stretched in luxury, without the least thrill of guilt. For the first time in her life, now in the warmth of George's love, she could forget the day's demands in sleep.

She'd cried so hard when George asked her to marry him that he'd been absolutely terrified. It was the relief. She thought he never would get it out. He was the only one who had given her any peace right along. It had been so sure and safe to be with him.

"I thought you'd *never* ask me," she had sobbed in his arms. And then she'd felt him begin to laugh and had to laugh too.

Well, it was over now! It was one of the things they had to laugh at together—one of the things he'd tell the children—"You know what your mother said when I asked her to marry me?" A family joke. That was what those dreadful months of tension had resolved themselves into. She was so happy. She was so at peace. A family. Thirty-one isn't too old to begin.

She swung her feet out of bed and wiggled them into her mules. The phone rang and she hurried over to the door and pulled it open. George calling up, probably.

But it was only Peggy Gilmore, wanting her to come over for lunch, wanting, probably, to talk about last night, to tell her how nice it had been, but had she noticed . . .? Helen didn't feel equal to it. So—no, she was awfully sorry; she couldn't make it for lunch. She was terribly busy. "See you next week, dear." She hung up the receiver, and the luxury of a perfectly empty day, with no demands on her whatever, swept around her again. This was her day, all hers. Peggy Gilmore couldn't have the tiniest corner of it.

George was late getting home. But Helen was still lying on a chaise longue on the sun porch. She had been so happy all day, doing nothing. She didn't want to move. She didn't want anything to end this repose.

It was George who had created it, George and her own wonderful, marvelous good fortune. George was the solid rock of her life. Without him she would be utterly adrift, unable to hold onto anything, seeing reality slip through her fingers like a rope of smoke.

He came, just as she had known he would. He banged the kitchen door and shouted, "Hello, Nancy! What's the smell?" And then he came out onto the porch. He was eating a piece of gingerbread and he looked about three times life size.

Helen sat up quickly to get him back in perspective, but he ducked to kiss her just then and so he seemed to stay the same enormousness. It wasn't till he took his hat off and threw it across at a chair on the other side of the chaise and sat down beside her that he began to look normal.

"It's good to be home," he said. "It's real warm out here. Spring will be early."

Helen's hand tightened on his.

"It can't be too early for me," she said.

"Poor darling," said George. "I wish we could have stayed South longer."

"Oh, no," said Helen quickly. "I'm perfectly happy here. I'm glad to be home and settled. Florida was sort of out of the world. This is home."

"I know," said George. He bent to kiss her.

"Guess I'll go and wash up," he said, and went inside. He was so big. He was there. He walked on the earth and you could imagine his footsteps shaking it.

She got up and went over to the glass outer wall of the porch, and looked up. One sharp star was above her, pinned to a branch of the elm that stretched over the porch, over her head. "Star light, star bright," she began, and wished, in an agony of wishing that clenched her hands into fists, cold against the glass, warm against her breasts, as she leaned there. "I wish, I wish—" But there were no words for her desire.

"Dinner's ready, Mrs. Peterson," said Nancy at the door. "Soup'll get cold." And George, inside, said, "Hey!"

IN LESS than a month the spring they had invoked awoke. Early one morning the scent and warmth were there.

George stirred and woke; tried to turn and throw the quilt off. But Helen lay against his shoulder, cramping his arm. Deeply asleep, yet conscious of his waking, she sighed and moved closer in his arms.

It was just three months and a day since they had been married. He could still feel surprise move within him at the thought that Helen was really his.

No one knew, not even Lydia, what he had felt when she came back alone from that summer in Switzerland and the town buzzed with the news that Helen Walsh had married a German professor and was never coming home again.

He found himself dreaming of her and nobody else was so real. He knew it was useless, that he was fooling himself. but every penny he made was for her, if she

ever needed it, ever wanted it, if her letters to Lydia ever hinted at wanting to come home. . . .

It was 1930 that woke him out of his trance; that wiped Helen out of his mind, almost. The money went first—overnight, it seemed—and orders dropped and dropped and were canceled, and the market where he didn't have any more money went down and down. In the next year and the year after, he saw what a fool he had been, how impossible the dream that he had been kidding himself with. There was a woman in some German town, Frau Waldemar Gottfried, who had been called Helen Walsh once. He made up his mind to accept the life he had and not try for anything more.

Then Helen came home.

Helen. Why, this was Helen! In his arms.

It was too much. He could feel his startled skin shiver at the realization. He would never get used to it, really, deep down. This was Helen. He didn't need to dream. He had her. A wave of exultation swept through him. He wanted to laugh. It was so enormously funny, how things went on just the same, just as they had before. He was still worrying about money; it had all settled down again, and things went on much the same way as before.

Except that he had her and didn't want anything else out of life. Except that the gray monotony he had lived in before was all gone. Except that the world had turned itself inside out for him.

Everything just the same. He couldn't help laughing.

Helen woke. "George?" she said dimly. "Um?"

He held her to him. "Look. Spring's here already."

IT HAD been harder even than Lydia had thought to go to George's office.

You must do it, she kept telling herself, walking down in the brisk March air. You have no right to hold on to pride now—for that was really it. She hated—oh, how it shamed her!—to have to admit how stupid she had been letting those mortgage payments accumulate, until now there wasn't a chance of paying them back. She clenched her teeth together as she came across the street toward the factory and promised herself, as she still did sometimes on the way to the dentist: It'll be over and done with in an hour—just an hour more. Think how good you'll feel then.

George came out himself and took her right into his office. She shook her head at his questions about her health; she couldn't answer; she *must* get this done with!

"George," she began, "you know the mortgage on the house? Well . . ." She went on and on. She didn't look at him while she talked. She tried to keep her voice down. He asked her only one question as she finished: "When did you say it was due?"

"I think—I figured it out—three days from today." And there was silence for a long moment in the room.

"Why in the name of heaven didn't you tell me before?"

Lydia's eyes opened queerly as she stared back at him. "I didn't want to bother you," she said.

George opened his mouth then and talked for five minutes, perhaps, to that bent head. "—I might have managed then; but now, in three days, what can I do? I've been having the devil of a time making collections. I haven't dared to draw more than enough to live on almost ever since we got back—I've got to meet a payroll twice a month—" He stopped at last because she didn't raise her head.

And he was dreadfully ashamed of himself. After all, Lydia had taken care of Helen for a year and a half before they were married. He stopped shouting. "I'm sorry," he said. "Forgive me, Lydia. I—it's just that I'm upset about this. You see, if you'd let me know before, it would have been easier. Well, never mind. There'll be another quarter due soon, won't there? We'd better count that in too." He tried to sound purposeful, but his voice didn't even convince himself.

She was silent when he finished. Finally she said, "I don't want to put you to any trouble, George. I didn't realize—I thought you'd be able to let me have it without any bother. I thought—"

"You thought it was like six years ago," said George. "That's O. K., Lydia. It isn't your fault it's not. I'll do everything I can. I'll talk to Preston and see if we can work out some way. Come in this afternoon, late. I'll let you know what he says." He got up as she did. "Don't worry too much," he said awkwardly. "We'll fix something up." He nodded and smiled. But the smile faded as the door closed behind her.

After she had gone George reached for the telephone. There's just one thing to do, he thought. Call the bank. I won't know what's what until I've talked to Preston.

But the talk left him in a worse state than ever. He couldn't believe it at first. He'd only asked for a thousand dollars—and Preston couldn't give it to him.

Of course he knew Preston didn't have the last word since that Boston bank had taken over the First National, but he couldn't get over it, just the same—his oldest friend turning him down. In the eyes of the world of financiers and bankers, George Peterson, third in direct line of descent from the founder, president of the Peterson Furniture Company, wasn't worth lending a thousand dollars to.

He sat there staring straight in front of him. He had a pang of temptation to go home to Helen. He wanted her gaiety and laughter and unconcern, and particularly her ignorance of what had happened. But he couldn't do it. Lydia was coming to the office. He had to tell her what had happened. He had to admit to her that he was not worth a thousand dollars.

He saw himself beginning the conversation: "Damn it, Lydia, what did you expect me to do? Don't you realize what a criminal fool you've been?"

But when she came in he knew he didn't want to say it. "It's no good, Lydia," he said as gently as he could. "I'm sorry. It's not Preston's fault, but he's got to have cash. I haven't got it. I told you I didn't, you know. I'm sorry. So—so is he."

He saw all the expression die out of her face.

"I see," she said dully. "Well, I guess there's nothing to be done. Thank you for trying."

In that broken attitude he saw the indomitable pride that had made her "not want to bother" him. Lydia had been trained to privacy, to inhibition. It must have been hard enough, at the last, for her to come to him at all. We must make it as easy as possible for her, he thought. Between them the silence grew more tense. George had something to say, but it wouldn't come out. It meant a whole change in life, a new beginning. Yet it was her due. She took Helen in without any question. What would people think if we didn't? But I should think she'd rather not come; she's always been alone and independent—probably she'll say no. That's it. She'll probably refuse.

AND so at last he was able to say it. "Lydia, I don't know if you've thought at all yet of where you're going to want to live—but—well, Helen and I—I couldn't allow you to do anything but come to us."

"Oh, no, I couldn't think of it!" Lydia answered in a flurried tone. She sounded unsure. "I—I—you're so happy," she went on. "I'd be in the way."

"That's nonsense," said George stoutly. "I—Helen will insist, you know, when she hears about it."

"No, George, really. I'd disturb all your arrangements. You wouldn't be comfortable."

"Now, Lydia, you know we'll just love to have you, Helen and I."

She was yielding; he could see it. He felt a quick shoot of fright, like a toothache. What the hell is the matter with me? he thought. Haven't I any gratitude, any charity? But he was feeling angry again at Lydia's shilly-shallying.

She's wanted to say yes all along, he thought, but she's too genteel to do it without making me persuade her.

"Maybe for a little while," she said then; "maybe for a week or two, until I can turn around and see where I am. But I don't even want to think of imposing—"

"You're not imposing," said George as quietly as he could make himself, but he wanted to yell it. Damn the female sex anyway, he thought—all except Helen.

She got up slowly to go. "Thank you, George, for

everything you've done. I'll see Helen tomorrow. We can talk things over then." He held the door open, and she went out. He stared at the closed door for a little while, and then he shrugged his shoulders and tried to forget about it all.

AT THE closing of the back door Helen put down her book, waiting for George to bellow his first remark to her.

But he was perfectly silent. Her first thought was, He's terribly tired. Then she was suddenly frightened. Why didn't he speak? What is it? Her heart pounded.

He must have seen the fright in her face, for he smiled and said, "Hello, kitten. Have a good day?"

"Perfect. But you didn't. What's the matter, dear?"

"Helen—"

"Yes, dear?"

"I've got some bad news. It's about Lydia."

"About Lydia!" Helen stared at him in blank amazement. "Is she ill? Why didn't she call me?"

"No, no, she's perfectly all right. It's her mortgage."

"Her mortgage!" repeated Helen, and felt an insane desire to laugh. She thought the world was falling to pieces, and there it was, nothing but Lydia worrying about her mortgage. "My goodness, George," she said gaily, "you scared me nearly to death. For heaven's sake, don't ever again try to break anything to me gently. You're terrible. I thought you'd been indicted for manslaughter at the very least." She smiled up at him. "Tell me about it. I'm anxious to hear."

"Well," said George, blurting it out, "it's just that she hasn't been able to meet payments on the mortgage for over half a year and very foolishly told no one about it, and now—now she's losing her house."

"Losing her house!" Helen stared at him, thunderstruck. "Why—can they do that? It sounds like East Lynne."

George drew a deep breath. "Look, Helen. You know what a mortgage is: you borrow money and put up something—Lydia put up her house—as security. The bank holds the mortgage, and it's foreclosing, because for more than six months she hasn't paid a penny of interest or the part of the principal she agreed to pay off every three months."

Helen was serious now. "When is this to happen? Will she have to move out?"

"Next month, I guess."

And then, having walked right up to the next question, Helen was silent.

"I asked her to come here," George said.

"Ah-h," Helen breathed, as if she received the words like a blow. "And is she coming?"

He looked at her quickly. Her face was stony. "Why, she said she would. For a week or two."

She still said nothing. He looked at her in surprise. "Honey, what could I do? She's a damn proud woman, Helen. I had to ask her to come here because—well, damn it, because I didn't want to. We're so happy—I don't want someone else around all the time; you know that. But I thought"—he tried to smile at her still face—"I thought, Helen won't think much of me if I let her sister down. Oh, Helen, she'll be a damn nuisance to you; I know it, but I couldn't help it! It's hell for her."

"Oh, I know!" said Helen, and burst into tears. "It's only—only— Oh, George, nothing can happen to us, can it? It's all right, George. You're right; you're quite right. It must be mostly my fault she lost the house. She must have borrowed that money because of me—for my passage and when I was sick, and then I was such an expense she couldn't pay it off and I didn't do anything to help her. So—she must come here." And Helen put her head against George's shoulder and wept.

George put his arms around her. "Oh, Helen, Helen," he whispered, "nothing, nothing can happen to us. Nothing. I won't let it!"

He felt her suddenly relax in his arms. Then slowly she put one hand up to his cheek, his mouth. She pulled herself close to him. "Oh, George," she said, "you're so decent! I never—I haven't thought of Lydia at all. Of course we must help her, make everything easy. It will be terrible, terrible for her. Oh, poor Lydia, poor Lydia—it will be hard enough for her just to come here—" She kissed him. "I do love you so, George."

She felt better already. She could see herself talking to Lydia tomorrow, feel the love and warmth with which she would urge her to come and stay as long as she wanted to. It would be good for Lydia too, to live with people and have company and conversation. Perhaps—perhaps she could even get Lydia married off. Charlie Jennings! He'd seemed to want to be attentive the other night. And Helen giggled to herself, planning for Lydia's future.

LYDIA was coming today. Helen looked at her book again, turned a page, and found herself staring out of the window once more. It was four o'clock. She said she'd be here by four. Why doesn't she come? It's like being late for your own funeral. Only it's mine.

Oh, no! That's horrible. I don't mean it. I can't begrudge a little comfort and companionship to my own sister. She took me in without any questions; I mustn't

ever forget that. We didn't get on, but then—it'll be easier here, in my own house. It's full of our love and our lives. I have so much, so much. But still, in spite of all her words, she felt the house uneasy.

A car splashed up the street and disappeared around the next corner. Nancy put her head in the door. "Guess I'll start the roast, Mrs. Peterson. Your sister's a bit late, isn't she?"

"Do put the things on, Nancy. I suppose it's the rain that makes her late. Too bad she didn't have a better day."

Nancy went on downstairs and Helen turned on the light by her head, found a cigarette, and now, with commonplace thoughts about dinner, the house had turned into shelter and protection. Perhaps by next April there would be someone else under its roof, a child for her and George. No! It's unlucky to think of anything you want so, she said to herself. But the longing had sent everything else out of her head. She sighed and cuddled her head in the pillow of the chaise longue and drifted into a doze. She did not hear the doorbell that, half an hour later, echoed through the house.

When George came in there wasn't a soul around. Then he saw it in the hall. Lydia's trunk. Upstairs now there was Lydia's room. There was Lydia.

He did not stop to think. He did not dare to. "Hey, stranger!" he yelled up the stairs.

And Helen woke up with a little start. And Lydia jumped a little and went toward her bedroom door. And Nancy, who had been playing hostess, said, "Good gracious, Mr. George!" and ran for the back stairs.

The house was full. George came pounding upstairs and caught Lydia in the hall. He kissed her cheek. "My, it's nice to have you here! Do you think you'll be comfortable?"

Helen's door opened, "Lydia dear! You let me go right on sleeping! I'm so ashamed!"

Lydia took a deep breath. "Why, of course I did!

Nancy showed me everything. I wouldn't have wakened you for anything."

Helen smiled vaguely and went right into George's arms and kissed him. Lydia, watching, thought he held her a bit longer than he need. After all, it wasn't as if they were alone.

Helen escaped at last and turned to Lydia. "Lyddy, do you have everything you need? Goodness, don't let's all stand around here in the hall! Come in here and sit down. George, what time is it?"

"It's ten to six. I am late; I couldn't help it. Awfully sorry, Lydia; I'd planned to be home before you were. Tell me, did everything go all right?"

"Oh, yes. Everything's out of the two top floors and piled downstairs now, waiting for the secondhand dealer. It'll bring me three hundred and eighty dollars, he said. It's all taken care of." There—she'd got it all out. The bare facts were all she could tell them.

But they did not ask her anything more. Across the room fell the first pause in the conversation, the first gap, the first united hint of boredom and distress, the family feeling. Now it had happened. Now it would go on.

That day, that wild rainy day that blew change here, disaster here, would be looked back on through the years. The day Lydia came. The day your Aunt Lydia came. The day dear old Aunt Lydia came to stay with us. There it was, ticketed, catalogued, for memory.

I can't stand this! thought Helen. I'll have to stop this. "George, we must celebrate. After all, we don't have Lydia come to stay with us every day. Let's go right downstairs and have cocktails." They got up then, following her, leaving the second floor to the wind and the dark. The night spilled over swiftly as the light was clicked off, and took possession of the room.

SPRING was late after all, surly and reluctant to come again after the first thaw. Then suddenly, with May, it came.

The classes at the school felt it and were wild as colts. Lydia bit her lip and watched her pupils dreaming out of the window, the whole class beyond the reach of discipline.

But the school was better than what she could not call home. It seemed to her as if Helen and George were always talking about things they didn't want her to hear —always stopping and dropping into silence as she came into the room. And she was always finding them sitting together on the sofa with their arms around each other. It was too much! It was—not quite decent. Other married couples didn't behave so! They had no shame. They didn't seem to care what she saw.

They were the hardest of all, the evenings, when George was there. She'd never had trouble talking to him before—but now Helen's quiet presence seemed to be a block to anything she wanted to say. They played the radio in self-defense, to cover the silences. And Helen laughed so unrestrainedly at stupid jokes that weren't always quite nice. "Oh, Lyddy, it's so funny, don't you see?" she'd say, and Lydia would say, "Yes," and smile a little.

It was things like that that made her realize again and again that she must hold herself apart from them. She must not give in to their easygoing ways, must not laugh at the nonsense they talked. She was so tired, tired down to her bones. Soon she would find a boardinghouse; soon she would talk to Helen of leaving definitely by such and such a date. But she was so tired now!

Charlie Jennings asked her to go for a drive with him after church one Sunday, and she said yes, just so that she wouldn't have to go back to that house with its air of bohemian relaxation. "I must be back for two-thirty dinner," she told him, smiling archly, and he stumbled through an assurance that he certainly would see that he got her back in time.

This was a little moment of peace such as she had not had in a long time, an island of repose set in her uneasy days. They turned up the concrete highway through the wide flat river valley to the hills.

"You mustn't let yourself be cooped up," Charlie was saying in a little fever of politeness. "I'd like—it would be a real pleasure to take you driving often."

She almost laughed at the thought that she was reduced to dependence on Charlie Jennings. But she couldn't help feeling grateful and friendly to him, and so she said, "I'd love to, Charlie. This is a real treat to me."

She was looking out the window, watching the telephone poles slip by and the slowly changing line of hills, so she didn't see him blush. He began to talk about a case he had tried that week, and Lydia, straining away from his dry legal expressions, drifted back to her thoughts.

But they seemed farther away, not so immediate as they did when they crowded around her in the darkness of her bedroom at Helen's. To go? Yes, of course, and soon. To stay? No, out of the question. Well, that was all there was to it, then. Except, of course, to decide how to do it.

She turned from the unhelpful landscape and tried to listen to Charlie. "—Bar Association convention in August," he was saying. "It'll be very interesting; and—uh —I feel, of vital significance to everyone."

Even Charlie had his plans all arranged for the summer, was going away in August. Only Lydia, out of all the world, sat looking at a blank wall, quite unable to imagine where August would find her. And August 16 was her birthday—her fortieth birthday. It began to pound desperately in her head.

Charlie had turned and was looking at her questioningly. "I'm sorry—I just said, 'Are you going away?' Perhaps you haven't decided yet; I mean—"

For some reason Charlie's question brought her an

answer. Full-fledged, the solution leaped into her mind, and she heard her voice say calmly and strongly, as if she had been considering it for weeks, "Do excuse me, Charlie; I was just dreaming for a moment. Yes, I'm going to the Columbia summer school in New York."

Her fatigue dropped off her like a cloak as he turned the car and started back to town. Two months in New York! Plays to go to, concerts, museums, the interesting people at the university—why, of course!

That was where Lydia Walsh belonged. And when she came back, of course, she could settle down where she pleased.

The car drew up before the house on Elm Street and Charlie turned to her. "Lydia, I know you'll have a fine time in New York. Of course you don't want to stick in this old town all the time, a woman like you, cultured . . . I just want to say—it doesn't matter, of course—I'll miss you. It means a lot to me—just to be with you . . ."

Lydia felt as if a bomb had gone off under her. She simply sat and stared back. All she could think was Charlie! Charlie Jennings! Of all things! *Charlie!* Time seemed to have stopped. The moment prolonged itself horribly, holding them face to face.

They didn't look at each other as she got out. But as she passed him she heard her voice murmur, almost whisper, "Thank you." Well, she could thank him for the drive, couldn't she? She almost ran up the path, without looking back once.

HELEN stood at the window, looking out into the hot afternoon that stretched infinitely down the street. It was too hot to garden. It was too hot to do anything.

There's nothing for me to do in this whole town! she said to herself. There's no place where I belong! I was a damn fool ever to come back here.

Her heart wrenched within her at the terrible, shocking treachery of the words. It's not true! There's George!

I'm not talking about George—I'm talking about you—you—you! What's the use of lying to yourself? You haven't got any real place here. You're not part of this stupid little town. Lydia—well, why do I worry about Lydia? She's gone, hasn't she?

I should have gone too. I'm smothering. There's nothing for me here—nothing—no one to talk to. Her next thought said very clearly, It is too hot here. I don't feel well. At that, she could have screamed. But she caught her breath and bit the scream off before it began.

Suddenly she saw that the light had changed. Thunderheads were blowing up, and the sun went out all of a sudden like a candle. Hastily, without looking back, she ran over to the door, calling, "Nancy, Nancy, it's going to storm. Quick, let's get the things in off the porch!"

The dry earth soaked up the rain, but it was not quick enough, baked hard as it was, to absorb it all, and the gutters were rushing with water as George came home. He splashed across a puddle to reach the driveway, spray blanketing the windshield for a moment. He ran the car into the garage and switched off the motor. This was a regular cloudburst. The rain was a curtain between him and the house, ragged at the edge where the roof let huge drops form and fall.

Then down the side porch ran Helen in an old tweed coat with a bright scarf over her head. She had his mackintosh over her shoulder and was waving a pair of rubbers. "Yoo-hoo," she called. "Rescue party!"

"Stay there!" he shouted back. "You'll get soaked!" But she was already down the steps and running across the lawn.

"Ooh!" he heard her shriek. "It's so wet! It's so cold!" And then she was in the shelter, in his arms, gasping, and he kissed her rain-wet cheek where a lock of hair was plastered. He wanted to kiss her again; he wanted to melt her body into his with a sudden fierce passion—she'd run to help him; she was his. Could he ask anything more? She was his. She really was his.

It was hot the next day and the next, with an almost tropical heat that the sun beat out of the wet ground between thunder showers. The garden grew fantastically, so heartbreakingly beautiful that just the smells at night made Helen want to cry sometimes, leaning out the window in her nightgown with the honeysuckle scent blowing about her. Deep summer and peace such as she had never known before.

The summer drifted on in a panorama of lazy days until at last one came when Helen found herself wondering with a heart that had all of a sudden turned into a pinwheel, whether she might be— No, she wouldn't even think of the word. It would be bad luck. But she felt the room spin round her. Now wait, she told herself, wait a little while to make sure. She wanted to wake George up right then and there, but she bit her tongue and made herself keep still.

THE dining room welcomed the sun. It flickered on Helen's hands as she sat and poured George's coffee. She could hear him on the stairs already. Oh, don't be such a coward! she told herself. Tell him right now. You ought to be ashamed of yourself for not telling him last night. It'll make him so happy. It'll make him so proud. There's no doubt now. Go on. Tell him!

Then he was in the room. It seemed to take him forever to cross over and bend down and kiss her. As he bent over her he smelled of shaving soap and bay rum, and his hand was heavy on her shoulder.

I love him, she thought with amazement, as she did so often; I really do. There's no doubt of it. I do love him, "George darling—" she began without any hesitation.

But he was already speaking, "Gee, kitten, you look pretty. So pretty every morning!" He sat down and picked up the paper. Now, for heaven's sake, she said to herself, he doesn't have to read that damn paper now! "George," she said again.

"Uh-huh," he answered without looking up. "Hey, the Giants lost another game—three in a row."

"Oh, for heaven's sake! Listen, George."

"H'm? What?" He looked up in surprise, his orange-juice glass tilted perilously. "What is it?"

"Don't spill your orange juice!" she said in a level tone of fury. "No, that's not what I want to—" The swinging door creaked and Nancy came in with a platter of scrambled eggs. "Oh, my Lord!"

George blinked at her patiently as Nancy went out noisily. "What's the matter, kitten? Are you upset?"

"No, I'm not!" cried Helen hysterically. "I'm fine. I'm wonderful. I don't know what good it does to try to tell you anything! Never mind. Never mind."

"Now stop it! Stop that! I'm not going to have you carrying on like this. Oh, for Lord's sake, Helen, stop it!"

His face relaxed when she went over to him and settled herself on his knees with her arm around his neck. "This is awfully conventional and sentimental. Promise me you won't hold it against me, George?"

"Dope! Yes—yes, I promise."

"Oh, George, for goodness' sake, I'm going to have a baby. No, it's all right. I'm not going to cry. Really I'm not—it's just— Oh, dear! Oh, George, don't look so startled! You look so funny! So funny!"

She began to laugh and hiccuped and couldn't catch her breath at all, couldn't do anything but rock herself back and forth on his lap while he banged her on the back.

At Lydia's voice from the doorway they both jumped. "What have you been doing? Is this the way you enjoy your breakfast when I don't come down? I thought I'd make quite a sensation coming down to breakfast, but I see I'm far outshadowed. What were you trying to do, Helen? Or is it a secret?"

There really wasn't any reason why Helen shouldn't have told Lydia, but she couldn't after that.

George finished his coffee and got up. "I'll walk out with you while you get the car," said Helen hastily.

They went in silence through the kitchen, in silence crossed the lawn to the garage. Then as she passed him he caught her arm. He wet his lips and said, "Honey—gee, honey. Gee, Helen—I—I'm not used to it yet." He grinned apologetically. "Just tell me—you—you are sure?" She nodded. "When?"

"In March," she said.

"In March." He smiled idiotically, and she found herself smiling back, and they stood in silence there for half a minute perhaps, just smiling at each other.

CHARLIE went up the stoop and rang the bell. He waited in the sweet-smelling dusk and finally there were footsteps in the hall and George opened the door.

Charlie was conscious of Helen's getting up as they came in. He heard her say, "Well, isn't this a nice surprise?" But all the time he was watching Lydia's face, on which no definite expression, either of pleasure or resentment, had yet appeared. She still had the book she had been reading open in her lap. Sitting on the edge of his chair, Charlie almost wished he hadn't come. But faint heart ne'er won fair lady, he told himself. And besides, no one knew why he had come.

But Lydia knew why he was there. The excitement of her heart told her. She was afraid someone might hear it in the silence, it pounded so. Absurd! she said to herself, and clasped her hands hard on the book in her lap to quiet her pulses. No one knows. No one can hear. Suppose he does come? Suppose I let him come? It doesn't mean anything. After all, how can I stop him? It would mean I know, and he would know I know . . . Oh, I can't do that. I don't have to pay any attention to him. Just ignore him politely.

Ignore him. But even as she thought it something without name—there was no name low enough, vile enough—something squirmed in desperate pleasure at the palpable lust that came across to her from Charlie. She was trembling; she could feel perspiration on her forehead. But she could not move; only let the devil within her pant in desire.

Then she was conscious of George's voice talking over

the low rumble from the radio, warm and faintly vulgar, as she had always known; no Boston inflection, no trace of Harvard at all. George's voice. It reached right into her, deeper than seemed possible. Familiar as her own breathing. It annihilated Charlie.

HELEN woke up one morning with a dreadful uneasiness in her stomach. George wanted her to have breakfast in bed, but all the perverseness of her Puritan ancestry rose up and insisted she get dressed. It was a miserable day.

Of course it was that afternoon Lydia picked to go rummaging after books and papers for her classes, that began in less than a week. Helen went with her to the storeroom, not wanting to, but not wanting, either, for Lydia to think she didn't want to help her. Then Lydia began to get difficult, and after Helen had broken two nails helping her tug suitcases and boxes of winter comforters off the top of her crated books she remarked, "What's the use of unpacking them all? I'll only have to pack them again when I move."

Helen, who had collapsed on a top of a trunk, felt a quick burning in her breast. "But, darling, you need them now," she began. "And you're not going to move right away, anyway."

Lydia turned quickly. "Why not? I ought to. I ought to go tomorrow—today."

"Oh, now, Lyddy, be sensible, darling, do," Helen said determinedly. "Aren't you happy here? Wouldn't you be lonesome by yourself?" Her voice sounded flat and impersonal and very far away, she thought.

Lydia's eyes came up and met Helen's. "You don't want me," she said.

Helen's training in being a nice person, all the different ways of thought that made it very important to her to have people like her, moved together to make her meet this hideous truth with sweetness.

"Oh, Lydia, that's not true!" she cried. "I want you very much!"

"Why?" asked Lydia baldly. "Don't try to be nice to me, Helen. You didn't want me last year, when you got married. You never worried then about whether I'd be lonely and you never worried when you married that German, either, and left me all alone in Europe, all alone in the whole world. You've never realized how I loved you. You just went right off and left me whenever a man whistled to you. *You've* never been alone. *You've* always had someone to take care of you. And when you couldn't find anybody else, you'd come back to me."

Then mercifully the tears came. Lydia put her head down on her arms and sobbed desperately.

Kindness—that was what Lydia needed, just plain kindness of affection. "Lyddy, dear Lyddy," Helen said and put her arms around her. "There now, dear, there now. Cry it out. You'll feel much better if you just cry it out. Take your time. There, there."

Lydia quieted a little. There was no sound, only Lydia blowing her nose hard, only her words floating in the air between them. I won't; I won't remember them! Helen cried to herself. She wanted to get up and run, run away as fast as she could, upstairs to her own comfortable bedroom. She wanted to leave Lydia behind and slam the door on her stubbornness and her bitter, untrue—they *were* untrue—accusations.

Kindness and affection, she remembered. It had helped before. Helen took a deep breath. All right, she thought. You wait. I can make you stay. I will. "I do need you," she said. "I'm going to have a baby. Now do you see? I'll need you awfully."

Lydia slowly raised her head. "Helen—" was all she said, but there it was on her face—all the uncertainty, the loneliness and bitterness. It was imploring! Please let it be true, please mean it, please need me.

"It's true, it's true," said Helen, and knew she had won.

"Oh, darling," cried Lydia, "how lovely! I'm so happy for you! I'm so glad!" She caught Helen in her arms and gasped into tears again, and Helen, caught off balance, sobbed with her. Together they stood and cried happily, closing up the gap without mentioning the words that had been said.

Fall came and went in a brief flame of color. There were half a dozen little frictions in spite of Helen's resolve to overlook things in that new pang of pity for Lydia. The dull winter days set in, burying brilliant fall in a shroud of dampness and sticky snow. And suddenly Christmas was upon them.

More and more inertia and laziness were taking their hold of Helen. Sometimes it was all she could do to wake up in the morning, she felt so tired. She tried knitting things for the baby, but it was so many years since she had knitted anything, and the results were so odd, that it was much more exasperating than soothing.

Sometimes she was conscious of George looking at her in a strange, helpless way as though he were wondering what she was thinking. But if he had asked, she couldn't have told him, since she really didn't know herself. All she was conscious of was the little irritations that always seemed to be there so close to the surface, the irritations she usually managed to choke back. But that morning, a few days before Christmas, when George suggested having some people in for cocktails, her tense nerves made her feel like screaming.

"Oh, for heaven's sake!" she blurted out. "Why didn't you let me *know* you wanted a party? Now I haven't got a thing ready and I wanted a roast for dinner tonight."

"Well, why not?"

"Oh, I can't ask Nancy to do all that. Now we'll just have to have a pick-up meal. All *right*, George. I'll have everything ready."

George smiled placatingly. "You don't have to have a party just to have a few friends in for a drink," he said. "I don't want anything fancy. Just a few of those little what's-its and some potato chips and olives. . . . Go on. Be a good girl. Nobody can give a party like you! I'll be home in time to fix the drinks."

Helen was so mad she couldn't say a word. Just a few friends in for a drink! They'd have the neighborhood here and no one would go home till ten o'clock. I'd like to give him a piece of my mind, she thought.

But Lydia spoke first. She nodded at Helen and said comfortably, "All right, George, don't worry about a thing. We'll have everything fixed by the time you get back. Run along now, and leave it to me. I won't let Helen get tired.

"Now, then," she went on after George had gone, "let's make out a list of what we need, and then I'll go to market and you can telephone the people you want and lie down later. It won't take long to fix things this afternoon, and if you don't feel like it, you don't need to do a thing."

TELEPHONING, Helen found herself becoming infected with hospitality too. She had practically gone through her address book by the time she finished, and called George, still in a mood of elation.

"George," she said, "the party's all fixed. Everyone's coming, and if you want to call anyone else, it will be all right, because we have plenty for everyone."

"I knew you'd get everything done right," he said, and she knew from the pride and relief in his voice just how nasty she had been that morning. I must be better, she thought with a pang. I mustn't be so irritable.

"Oh, darling," she said, "we'll have a fine time!"

"Sure we will. Don't do too much now. Let Lydia take care of things for you. See you later."

Lydia was taking care of things with a vengeance. She kept urging Helen to lie down, and finally Helen knew she'd have to. She could have an hour before she began to get dressed, and it would rest the tired spot in her back even if she didn't go to sleep.

"I think you ought to rest too, Lyddy."

"Now, don't you worry about me. I'm as strong as a horse. I've still got things to do. Run along."

It was wonderful to lie down. Helen slept until it was quite dark. When she awoke, there was no light in the room at all and no sound. "George?" she said automatically, but he wasn't beside her. She sat up too quickly and her head spun. What time is it? Why, where's everyone? She went over to the door and opened it.

Voices came up the stair well, and George's laugh. She moved out to the stairs. Someone began to play the piano, and quickly people were singing. She stood with her hands on the balustrade and listened.

She realized that the party was going on without her. How terrible of Lydia to have let her sleep; how—yes, how malevolent! Did she want to take the party over, be hostess by virtue of Helen's weakness? Trembling with urgency, Helen went back to her room and pulled on a dress.

She saw Lydia come in, in the mirror. Helen swung round to face her.

"Why did you let me sleep through the party?"

"Nonsense! It's only quarter past five—only the Gilmores and the Parkers are here yet. George wouldn't let me come up till now."

"Why didn't George come up himself?"

"I'm sorry. I'll send him at once. Someone has to stay with your guests, you know!" The door closed smartly.

Helen was hurrying so, she didn't even notice Lydia's anger. It was all right; the center of the stage was still hers. She finished her hair, smoothed her dress, looked critically over her shoulder into the mirror, turned hastily away so as not to see her thickening figure. She went

deliberately downstairs. The Dorseys were just arriving and they went into the living room together.

"Oh!" cried Martha Dorsey in a small piercing shriek, rather as if she had seen a mouse. "Oh, what a beautiful tree!"

Helen stood there staring at it. So that was why Lydia had sent her off to sleep! She'd wanted to do it all by herself. It was enormous: the top swept the ceiling; it dominated the end of the room by the library door; it looked beautiful. Helen was really stunned.

Peggy Gilmore put her arm through Helen's and pulled her away. "It's a lovely tree!" she said loudly, and then in an undertone, "How are you feeling, dear? Any more headaches?"

Alice Parker joined them before Helen managed to get out an answer, and Helen could see by the look in Martha Dorsey's eyes that she was aching for a good woman-to-woman conversation too. The center of the stage! she thought, having the bitter grace to laugh at herself. I'm positively a one-woman zoo!

"Isn't it a lovely tree?" she countered. "Lydia did it all. Lyddy, it looks perfectly— Lyddy? Where did she go?" She had vanished, and Helen couldn't find her because more people came in just then. She was always a good hostess, and she had a fine time.

CHRISTMAS comes too early. It follows hard on the beginning of winter, and any beginning has its own exhilaration. But after the holidays comes the drab slough of the year. Nothing is left except to wait for spring.

The school term was ending. All day Lydia had felt tired and depressed. Her mind was so tired—she just couldn't think straight. In a fit of irritation she slammed the door and went out, leaving everything behind.

On the streetcar she sat with her eyes closed. Home. Going home. How absurd! It's not my home. I have no part of it. I won't have a part of it! I shall be alone. Alone. The word amazed her. She opened her eyes to find she had almost ridden past her stop. Hastily she climbed off and started to walk up the familiar street.

She stopped automatically at the front gate and put her hand out for the latch. It wasn't there.

Where was the gate? What had happened to the house? And then she realized.

It wasn't her house. It was the government's house, the Polacks' house. She had been so terribly upset some weeks ago when the WPA had leased the old Walsh house for a sewing project to provide employment for needy women. She couldn't bear to think of it, her father's house turned over to those awful foreign women, Italians, Polacks, people like that. And so, in that way she had of pushing things away from her when they were just too heartbreaking to be borne, she had refused to think about it any more. But of course she had. The thoughts had been there in her subconscious all the time, growing and growing, until at last they had pulled her back, so that she had got off the trolley at the wrong stop, unconsciously taking the old turns.

The porch had been glassed in, the wistaria ruthlessly cut down to permit the job. The lawn had been trampled into mud and frozen again where the lilies of the valley had been. Step by step she went up the walk, her hands tight on her handbag and umbrella. She reached the steps, and they creaked under her feet just as they always had. She bowed her head over the doorknob for a moment before she tried to turn it. It was locked.

Now I must go, she said, quickly turning away, but the poor cut stumps of the wistaria caught her eye, and she walked along beside the bed where the blue iris came up each spring, wringing her hands together. Now she could not stop.

Then she saw that, back of her, to her left, the kitchen door stood ajar. She went up the back stoop to close it, but for a minute, for just a minute, it would do no harm to look inside—she had seen so much already that she couldn't be hurt by anything more.

The kitchen was empty. Someone had torn the linoleum by the pantry door, and for a foot or so the wide old boards showed. She was walking in a dream as she went into the dining room—the chandelier gone, leaving a gaping hole in the ceiling. She didn't hear the voices in the library at all as she went to the door.

A MAN and a girl were sitting on the floor, on his overcoat, which he had spread out to protect them from the mess and litter. His arm was around her, and as Lydia froze in the doorway he was saying, "—perfectly safe. There's no one comes here after four o'clock in this weather, and no one comes at all without I say so. The only keys—"

He stopped and looked up. His face darkened.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded. He pulled the girl back behind him and turned awkwardly to scramble to his feet. "How did you get in here anyway? Don't you know this is private property?"

Lydia's heart was beating hard at the bottom of her throat.

"You filthy lecher," she whispered.

He jumped back as if he'd been stung.

"Look, lady, that's no way for you to talk. You didn't see anything, see? Just remember that, and don't try to pull any funny stuff, or I can have you up for burglary so fast—" His voice trailed off because she obviously wasn't listening to him.

"Here," she whispered. "Here in this room. It's here, in this room, where he worked for thirty years—it's here. It's now. O God, how could You—how could You allow—" Suddenly she was shouting. "Get out of here! Both of you, get out! I'll kill you if you don't!"

The girl, who had been huddling behind the man, screamed and started up. Then she was gone, and her footsteps sounded through the house.

The man still stood, panting, left to face this incredible figure whose face he couldn't see plainly in the dimming light. He was suddenly frightened.

"Listen," he said, not very hopefully. "Listen—"

She took a step toward him. She was quite as tall as he was, and she had an umbrella in her hand. She raised it in front of her.

He dodged past her to the door. His footsteps were loud for a moment, and then all Lydia could hear was her own pounding heart. She stood still, feeling its beat lessen and slow. And the house quieted with her. She stood alone in her house as she had stood so often before. They were meant to live together. She could walk through it in the lampless thickening dusk without even putting out a hand to find a doorjamb.

So in the dark she wandered through the first floor.

Her hand caressed the walls as she passed, pausing to cradle a doorknob. She saw it all wordlessly, in the grip of an enchantment, walking like a ghost. Then at the foot of the stairs she stopped, resting her hand flat on the top of the newel post.

For it was over. She didn't want, now, to climb the stairs. She had seen everything she could stand. The spell had run out. It was over. And now, at last, she would go.

Back through the hall she stumbled. It was dark and she was afraid—and very, very tired. How did she know what lurked in the dark? This wasn't her home. This was the government's house, the Polacks' house. There might be more people here, like those two she had caught in sin. For a while, wandering about her house, she had forgotten all about them, but she remembered them now with a jerk of terror.

Suppose they came back? I've got to get out of here, she thought.

Then, like a dreadful joke, the torn linoleum by the kitchen door caught her foot, and full length, heavy, frozen with fear into rigidity, she fell. She pulled herself up to her feet, tears salt on her face and a queer salty taste in her mouth too. Her knee was a burst of pain, but she could stand on it.

A board creaked suddenly in the hall behind her. Clutching her bag and her umbrella, she was at the door, trying to control the fingers that could hardly find the knob and the latch. At last, at last, it swung open and she was out in the windy dark.

It was seven blocks down to Helen's street, and then to the right—and, O God, how tired she was! She walked on, limping, but slower and slower. Must get home, was all she thought. Must get home. There it was, finally. She turned up the walk, reached the door, and collapsed against it, her forehead on the brass knocker. There were footsteps in the hall and the door opened.

"Lydia!" Helen screamed it. "What's happened?"

"I had a fall. That's all. A fall." How funny! It rhymed!

"Where?"

"At my house."

"At your house! You went there? But why? Why?"

"I—I don't—want to talk about it."

"Of course not, you poor dear. Here, sit down. Let me look at you. Oh, Lyddy, there's blood on your chin."

"I'm all right, perfectly all right now I've got my breath. I bit my tongue when I fell, that's all the blood is."

"Are you sure? You—you frightened me so, Lyddy. My heart's still pounding. The blood and your hat all crooked and your stocking torn—"

"I'm sorry I'm so disgusting to look at, but if you'll wait just a minute I'll go upstairs and—"

"Oh, Lyddy, how can you say such things? I only meant I was worried about you; you scared me. Now rest a minute and you're going to get right into bed. You'll have dinner there, and I'll bring you up a good hot drink first."

Nancy helped Lydia upstairs and Helen went into the kitchen. Water on to boil for the toddy. Half a lemon. Teaspoon of sugar. Brandy. Where's the—? Oh, here. Come on, boil now. Hurry. Now why? Why did she go there? What was she doing there? What was she doing?

The toddy was ready. Slowly up the stairs, which already made her pant—and two long months to go. Why did she go there? It must have been some kind of compulsion, a need to suffer.

Is she—is she—unbalanced?

She had reached Lydia's room. Nancy had got her into bed and was washing her bruised face. She opened her eyes as her sister came in, and for a long, long minute Helen looked into those eyes as she crossed the room. They were not friendly. They were closed doors.

Nancy went out and Helen sat down on the edge of the bed. "Do drink this, Lyddy. How do you feel?"

"It's nothing," Lydia said firmly. "I'll be all right in the morning."

But at Helen's insistence she took a sip. And another. Slowly the level of liquid fell in the glass. Then she closed her eyes and let her head fall back. "I'm so tired, Helen. I'll go to sleep now. Don't wake me for dinner. I need to sleep."

Helen turned the lamp out and went to the door in the darkness.

George was in the hall as Helen came downstairs.

"What's the matter with Lydia?" he asked. "Nancy says she fell."

Helen came over to him without speaking. He bent and kissed her, but his face was still worried. She pulled away from him, feeling suddenly angry. Lydia, always Lydia! They couldn't even be alone together any more.

"Yes, she did. She was at the Poplar Street house. She walked home, so there couldn't be anything seriously wrong. I put her to bed with a hot toddy."

"But honey, shouldn't she have a doctor?"

"I'll certainly call Dr. Rinehart in the morning if she seems to need him. And if she'll let me. She—I think she needs rest more than anything else."

"Don't you think you ought to call him now?"

"For heaven's sake, George! You sound as if I'm neglecting my own sister. She's asleep now. I'm not going to burden her with unnecessary doctor's visits and questions! Give her a chance to pull herself together."

"Sure, sure, I don't want to disturb her. I know you took good care of her, but a fall can be tricky sometimes. I know it's silly, but I'd feel better if Rinehart—"

"Go call him up," said Helen, and walked into the kitchen. She was so angry she was nearly paralyzed. Dr. Rinehart was a fool as far as psychology went. She could hardly eat any dinner. And instead of watching her, coaxing her, worrying about her with the warmth and concern she had protested against so often, George sat opposite her, eating in silence. What she had feared before from time to time had come true. He was angry at her. And she didn't care. She was so tired.

IN the living room after dinner they didn't bother to turn on the radio to cover the silence. They let it lie about them, both too angry and proud to ask the questions in their minds: Helen's "Did you call Dr. Rinehart?" George's "Aren't you going to see if she's awake—if she wants something?"

At nine thirty, just as Helen was about to break the stillness and announce that she was going to bed, the doorbell rang. George got up with a sidelong glance at her. He was going to say, "I guess that's Rinehart now," but he was suddenly ashamed of himself. Mightn't he, after all, have trusted Helen? He wanted to stroke her hair as he passed her, but she looked forbidding.

In the hall, opening the door, he took on a false joviality. "Well, doctor! Mighty nice of you to come over here

on a night like this. Hope you're not frozen. But Helen and I thought—well, we really don't want to take chances. You know falls can be pretty dangerous."

The doctor nodded sagely through the story and said, "Yes, yes. It's best to be cautious." Helen found her voice then. "If you'll just wait a minute, I'll run up and see if she's awake. I put her right to bed when she came in."

"Quite right, quite right. But don't run, take it easy."

Taking it as easily as she could, she was still panting as she pushed the door open. "Lyddy," she called softly. "Are you awake, dear?"

Lydia answered at once. "Yes, Helen. What is it?"

"The—the doctor's downstairs."

"I don't need a doctor. What perfect nonsense! I'm absolutely all right. A doctor!"

"Well"— Helen took an angry breath. (I knew she'd be this way!)—"George and I" (there was that comfortable lie again, putting the two of them together, sharing the blame, just as George had said, "Helen and I")—"George and I wanted to be sure that nothing—well, nothing internal—could have happened, you know, and go unnoticed. So we thought it wouldn't do any *harm* if Dr. Rinehart stopped in and just checked you over."

"I don't want that man going over me! He's so brusque."

"Brusque! Why that's the *last* thing I'd *ever* call him. Are you *crazy*? I mean—I mean— Anyway, there he is downstairs, poor man, waiting to see you. I can't let him sit there all night. Now, why don't you—"

"No, you never could keep any man waiting!"

"Lydia, how dare—" Helen pulled her lips in and set her teeth firmly against them. Wait—wait, she told herself. Wait, remember she isn't—she isn't herself. "I'm sure you didn't mean that, so let's forget about it. Won't you, please, for my sake and George's, see Dr. Rinehart? Even if you just tell him how you feel? Please?"

Lydia frowned. But she said at last, "I appreciate—your thinking of me."

THANK heaven George and the doctor didn't come up with me, Helen was thinking. Suppose someone had heard Lydia just then? Helen was afraid again, thinking of it, for surely no sane person would say such things. She went out into the hall and called to George and the doctor.

"Well, what's this you've been up to, Miss Walsh?" said Dr. Rinehart with a great air of jocularity.

"Lydia, you certainly gave us a fright," said George.

"I'm sorry these silly people dragged you over here, doctor," said Lydia. "It's really nothing at all. I tripped and fell and knocked the breath out of myself, and that's absolutely all."

"Now, now, young lady," said Dr. Rinehart, taking on an even more fantastic bedside manner than usual. (Brusque! thought Helen to herself.) "Now you must remember that I'm the doctor, not you. I'll just look you over very quickly; won't hurt you a bit—I never hurt my patients, do I, Mrs. Peterson?—and then, when I'm through, you let me say whether you're all right. Now, how was it you happened to fall?"

"I—I guess I caught my heel. The linoleum was torn."

"Oh—down in the kitchen?"

"No. I mean—yes—"

The doctor frowned. "Better have that linoleum fixed, Mrs. Peterson. We don't want any more falls."

Helen was silent. Lydia was staring at her hands folded on the blanket. Suppose she just said, "It wasn't here she fell"? Suppose she did?

"Why, I thought—" George started and Helen knew he was going to ask Lydia if she hadn't been at Poplar Street, and Lydia was going to be caught, and then she'd get hysterical and then . . .

"Let's run outside, George, and let the doctor do his job without an audience," she said, taking his arm. She got him out before he managed to finish his sentence.

"But I thought you said she was at her old place."

"That's what she told me."

"Well, isn't she going to tell the doctor?"

"Apparently not, George."

George fell silent, looking at her so questioningly that she had to stifle a desire to laugh. All her anger melted away, and she leaned over the stair rail to kiss him. In silence, as it had begun, their quarrel ended.

Lydia was home for about a week. And at the end of the week Helen knew, if anything, less about what Lydia had been doing at Poplar Street than ever. For Lydia just didn't talk about it.

So Helen watched Lydia covertly all the time, the pendulum ticking incessantly in her mind: Is she? Is she? Is she? Now—look, her mind isn't on what she's doing. What's she thinking about? Is she? Is she? She was so tired, too, so tired and puzzled and uneasy, and no one helped her at all. George didn't care, she thought resentfully one night, lying there beside him. In eight weeks now, maybe less, she would have to go to the hospital and face pain and sweat and—death, death, death, waiting to catch her!

She was going to die!

She sat up in bed, the blackness of finality swirling around her. No words, only terror, filled her mind.

George was awake, clutching her. "What is it, darling? Did you have a pain? What is it? Helen, Helen!"

"I—I had a dream, a nightmare. I forget what—"

"My poor baby. You should wake me up. Here, lie down. Go to sleep again. I'll take care of you." She lay rigid beside him, the sharpness of her panic gone, but a conviction of fear and defeat all about her. I haven't a chance. I'm too old to have a baby. I was a fool! Why did I want a child? Why should anyone bring a child into this terrible world? Oh, if it had to happen over, I'd never, never—"

"Helen," George said suddenly, "are you angry at me?"

She was so startled she couldn't answer for a moment. He went on then, before she spoke: "Yes, you are, aren't you? It's about Lydia, isn't it?"

Painfully she began then, not knowing what to tell him, having almost forgotten in her trouble not only that she had been angry but even that he had been aware of it or had a right to ask what she was feeling and thinking. "George, I—" Oh, what was the use of lying!

"Yes, I was angry."

"Why?"

"You don't understand about Lydia. You—"

"What about Lydia? Oh, damn it, Helen, why are you so tied up over Lydia? Tell me what it is that's bothering you or I'll—I'll—"

"You'll what? No, don't put your arm around me, it isn't comfortable. What'll you do?"

"Now, kitten, please don't be that way. Look—all I want to say is this: I don't give a damn about Lydia! I mean—oh, you know what I mean. Sure I'm fond of her. I'm glad to have her here, but—honey, it's *you* I'm thinking about! This is a pretty tough time for you. I know it. I want to do everything I can. You're tormenting yourself about something, and it isn't necessary; really it isn't. You shouldn't worry about anything now. Oh, please, darling, don't make me worry about you. I love you so. Please."

His arm came round her and she sighed, accepting it.

IT MADE Charlie nervous to come to the house now. He was never sure something awful wasn't going to happen to Helen when he was there. He gathered it was only a few weeks till the baby was due to come, and suppose, he asked himself, it begins while I'm there—what will I do?

But he couldn't stay away. He had to see Lydia, and so evening after evening he came to the house. When he came that evening, Helen was lying on the sofa with an afghan over her. Lydia was knitting on one of Helen's abandoned projects for the baby. George was in the dining room working at a litter of papers all over the table. The radio was making bad jokes.

"Well, howdedo, lady," said Charlie to Helen. "It's nice to see you looking so well. Good evening, Lydia. Well, George, this looks like income tax."

"Ugh," said George. "Look at this. How much can I charge off?"

Charlie went into the dining room and leaned over George's shoulder. "Well, look here. Now you could save right here—" The conversation grew technical as the two men settled down to it. Charlie took out his pipe.

Helen finished the detective story she'd been reading.

"What nonsense! Why are the solutions always so dull?"

"Why do you read them, then?" asked Lydia.

"I've got to do something. Seriously, though, Lydia, this baby is sapping my brain. If he'd only hurry up and get born! I'm just disintegrating mentally."

"Did the doctor say—" Lydia began.

"Good evening, everybody," said the radio. "Here is a special news bulletin. German troops marched into the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland today. In a speech to the Reichstag, Chancellor Adolf Hitler announced—"

"Oh, no!" said Helen.

Lydia looked at her, puzzled. "What is it?"

Helen sat up, her face strained. "George, did you hear? Why, it means war! Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland!"

"Yeah?" said George. "Is that so?"

"But isn't the Rhineland German?" asked Lydia.

"Well, yes, but—this breaks the Versailles Treaty! Why, Lydia, this is awful! Hush, I want to hear—"

"But, George, if you incorporate, you immediately avoid—"

"Charlie, do hush!"

"—denounced the Locarno Pact. In the French capital the reaction was one of astonishment."

"Good heavens! Aren't they more than astonished? Aren't they going to do something?" cried Helen.

"Well, I don't see how they can if it's Germany's own territory." Lydia switched her knitting and began another row. "It's awfully unfair of the French to say what the Germans can and can't do."

"It's not just the French! It's all of us! It was agreed under the treaty—"

"Oh, that treaty! Everyone knows it didn't work."

"Oh, Lydia, for heaven's sake! This breaks up the whole basis that Europe was running on!"

"Well, I certainly shan't work for them again if they declare war now. Belgium is one thing, but trying to tell someone else what he can do in his own country is another."

"Lydia, you talk as if they were just ordinary human beings! They're not—they're—"

"Who?"

"The Nazis, of course! They're—"

"Oh, the Nazis. I know you had an unfortunate experience with them, Helen, but I don't really see they're so different from anyone else. Let them alone! Why should we get mixed up in it? It's their country. Let them—"

"Lydia! You know nothing—nothing! The Nazis—they're beasts, beasts, beasts, I tell you! I know—I saw what they did. I know! Didn't they—"

"Here, here!" George came pounding into the room and knelt by the couch. "Helen! Here, stop it!"

Helen pushed him away from her, leaning across him to see Lydia. "Didn't they kill Demmy? Didn't they?"

"Helen—please," said George, but she paid no attention.

"My own husband—tortured—murdered—for no reason! Isn't that enough for you? For no reason, I tell you, but because he was a liberal; he believed in truth—and they killed him! They sent me the ashes in a cigar box. In a cigar box! I never told you that. Perhaps now you'll believe what they are!"

George stood up and picked her up in his arms. The afghan fell off as he carried her to the door, still crying, "Beasts! Beasts!"

Charlie picked up the afghan and held it out futilely with his mouth half open. Lydia stood staring at the door. They were stunned into silence.

"Come on," said Charlie, "let's get out of here."

Lydia let him put his hand on her arm and lead her out to the hall. Urgency came down upon them as they put on their things. Then the door opened and closed behind them, and they ran down the steps to Charlie's car.

"BUT it isn't that, Helen," George was saying. "Forgive you! Of course I do. I don't have to forgive you—I love you."

"Oh, you're so good! Better than I deserve. Oh, George!"

"But why didn't you tell me that he still meant so much? . . . You never even spoke about him to me. And then you come out like that—in front of—"

Helen turned her head back and forth on the pillow like an animal in pain. "What do they matter? I don't care about them. Oh, George—it's *you* I love. That other—I don't want to talk about it! I don't want to think about it!"

"But, Helen, it's haunting you."

"It's just Lydia—"

"Lydia! O God—look, Lydia hasn't got anything to do with it. Look, Helen, Lydia—"

"Lydia! Lydia! I know about Lydia—I know what she's up to. She wants to hurt me. She wants to kill me. She's in love—"

"*Helen!*" George roared it at her. Then he went over and sat on the bed and put his big hands on her shoulders. "You're making up nightmares."

"Yes, George," she said dutifully.

"Aren't you? You didn't mean that, did you?"

A pause. "No, George." Her eyes clung to his.

"I'm sorry about—about Gottfried." It was hard to say that name.

"Don't!" said Helen sharply, and closed her eyes. Tears came out from under the lids. "It was a different life, George. It's all dead now; really it is. Just once in a while I have a queer feeling that I'm back in it—something reminds me, and things I never want to think of come—come around me again. Tonight—the radio—"

"I know. I understand," he said, smoothing her hair.

But Helen went on conscientiously: "It happened, and I couldn't believe it, George. For a long time afterward I was trying to feel it all to the bottom. But I couldn't. It was too dreadful. I've never really been able to feel it through. And when I came back here, little by little I stopped trying. You helped me. But sometimes I can feel it there. As if I hadn't finished with it and never would."

"Now darling; now, darling," he said. He couldn't stand it any longer. He couldn't sit there and hear her talk about something he'd known nothing about, like that, and realize it was in the very heart of her life, that it was deep in her bones, making her alien to him forever and ever. "That's enough, darling. Put it out of your head. You said yourself it was dead."

"Dead," said Helen, and shuddered in his arms.

He pulled her closer to him, as if he could annihilate everything between them that way. "Helen, it's over. It was just a nightmare. You're all right now. And I love you. I love you so."

"I love you too," she said. "You're good to me, George." He tried to be satisfied with the words.

"Can you go to sleep now?"

"I guess so. Maybe you'd read to me a little while."

"Of course. Of course. And, Helen, it won't be long now till he's born. Then—then everything will be different."

"No," said Helen. "It won't be long."

"WHERE to?" said Charlie, but Lydia didn't answer. He started the car and drove downtown. She didn't say anything at all. Under the street lamps, glancing at her, he saw her eyes were closed.

He drove out to the country and still she didn't speak, and suddenly, seeing her so quiet, he found the courage he had been waiting for for months. He stopped the car. "When will you marry me?" he said quietly.

Lydia's heart jumped. She shrank away from him. "I can't," she said, and he felt her shuddering beside him.

"You can't!" Suddenly he was furious with her. "Have you been playing—"

"I haven't!" Her voice was shrill. She put her hands up on his shoulders. "I—you don't understand!"

He covered her hands with his. His voice said mechanically, "What is it? Tell me." But he was conscious only of the contact of their hands. He bent to her. She raised her head slowly, slowly. And then she was in his arms.

When she pushed him away finally he didn't realize what she was doing. He couldn't believe it. He was dazed. Then, feeling her body leave his, he pulled her close to him again.

"No. No. You mustn't."

"Why not! I love you; I love you."

She covered his mouth with her hand. He kissed it.

"Charlie, you must never—never—you don't know—I've never before—a man has never—you must let me go! Take me home!"

He laughed. Why, she was just as upset as he was! He had done this to her! "Of course I will, dear. Just as soon as you say when you'll—"

"Charlie, please—I can't bear it! Charlie, stop! Take me home. Neither of us can talk about this now. I've got to get back to Helen too. I've got to see how she is. She may need me."

"Lydia, she's married. She's got George. You—"

"A man! What can a man do for her?"

Charlie started the car then. He drove like an automaton. When they reached home, he sat and looked at Lydia, just a dark shape beside him.

She opened the door. "Good night," she said. She got out of the car and stood looking at the dark house. "I guess they're in bed. I'm tired. Good night, Charlie," and she was gone.

There wasn't a sound as she went upstairs in the dark. Oh, my God, what have I done? What's happened to me? she asked herself. And I'd die—I'd rather die than marry him. O God, God, help me! Help me!" She sobbed once, feeling once again his mouth on hers, the softening within her, his mouth, anonymous in the dark, belonging to any man, any urgent man, perhaps even the man she loved.

I will not. I will not think of it. I'll get a book, she thought. That detective story Helen was reading tonight when it—tonight. She snapped on the hall light to go downstairs, snapped on the living-room light from the hall and went in. The book lay at the foot of the sofa. She picked it up and turned to go.

GEORGE was standing in the doorway, watching her. George in blue pajamas and an old brown bathrobe, his hair tousled and his face tired and lined. Always she would see him like this now, this one midnight glimpse superseding every other image of him her heart had held.

"Couldn't sleep, huh?" he said. "Want some coffee?"

"That won't exactly make us sleep," said Lydia dryly, thrilling to that "us."

"Let's have a drink then. Tomorrow's Sunday. Sleep late."

He got up and started toward the kitchen, but he stumbled over a footstool and nearly fell, and she realized he'd been drinking before.

Now's my chance to get away, she thought, but she couldn't move as he came in, a glass in each hand swaying above her, enormous, male, potent, drunker than she had realized.

"Thank you," she said, taking the glass from him.

The drink made her gasp, and then suddenly it took hold. She was warm. She was no longer queasy. She felt relaxed. She took another swallow.

"Marriage is a great institution," George said suddenly, and then his face moved in pain and remembrance, and he went on quickly: "Now, you take—take my father. Very happy. Very happy marriage." He closed his eyes and appeared to go to sleep.

What am I going to do with him? thought Lydia. I've got to get him upstairs. She stood up and found that she was dizzy. How silly, she thought. I must be very tired.

George opened his eyes. He watched her come over to him. "Now you take Helen," he said.

The room died around her. She could hear her heart begin to pound, and she prayed, Let him go on. Oh, no, don't, don't! How can I live to the end of the sentence?

But George had heard his own words. She saw it stir in his eyes while all the rest of his face was stupid with drink. At the very core of him was Helen, and the thought of Helen had stained him with a dye that would never come out.

"Helen loves you," said Lydia stupidly. And I—and I—

He didn't even hear her. He heaved himself up and stood balancing himself by the chair back. "Tired," he said. "Get to bed."

"Yes, of course. We both must. You—you start up, George."

As he left, her face contracted with this dreadful, dreadful pain—to find him so, tonight of all nights. To see what her sister had done to him. But she had no time to think of that. All she could think of was his hand touching hers as she took the glass from him.

There was a sound in the hall. She went out quickly. Under the dim hall light he turned to her. "Waiting for you. Can't get up by myself. I'm drunk, you see." He smiled affectionately. "Wasn't going to tell you, but I've got to have you help me."

She took a deep breath. His arm came around her shoulders, heavy, heavy on her shoulders. His other hand took the railing. Up and up. How long—how far? Even in the upper hall he did not let her go but walked to the door of his room before he released her. "You're a good girl. Thank you," he said solemnly, and then he bent and kissed her on the mouth.

Lydia's hand came up to her face unbelievingly. She couldn't speak or move for a minute, and in that minute he turned and went into the room where Helen lay sleeping. She stood in the hall and then desperately, not caring who heard, she ran sobbing down the hall, banged her door behind her, and threw herself on the bed.

IT WAS the car driving off with George that woke her in the morning. Half asleep still, she heard his voice: "Sorry to keep you waiting, Preston." Then louder: "O. K., dear. I'll be back around two."

"Have a good round," called Helen's voice as cheerful as if she'd been handed a brand-new life.

The car drove off. Lydia stretched lazily, thinking, My, I feel comfortable and rested! I suppose I ought to go to church. I wonder if Charlie will be there. And then she remembered the evening before. The whole evening, from the awful scene with Helen to George's kiss. She could remember it all, but she couldn't believe any of it. She must have dreamed last night. She sat on the edge of the bed in unbelieving paralysis.

Then she heard something that caught her breath in her throat. Up the stairs, where she and George had climbed last night with their arms about each other, slow and clumsy with liquor, up the stairs something clumsy and slow was trying to come, with a pause and a creak. Lydia leaped up and went to the head of the stairs, looking down at her sister's contorted face.

Helen saw her. "Help me," she said feebly, "it's begun."

Lydia flew down the steps to her and put an arm around her body just as she went limp. In a dreadful repetition

of last night, Lydia helped her up the stairs and down the hall to the same room.

Lydia said quickly, "I'll go call the doctor."

"Not yet," said Helen. "He'll want to know how close the pains come. If you want to get dressed I'll lie here and time two or three. I've only had a few, and they're quite far apart, so there's really no great hurry. That one on the stairs was much the worst." And she thought, Won't George be surprised? I'm so glad he got off before this last one came. He'll be late—won't be home till two or two thirty. That gives me about four hours. I'll be all settled at the hospital.

She was conscious that Lydia was talking. "But you ought to get to the hospital. You upset yourself last night enough to—"

"Last night?" said Helen, and Lydia saw by her eyes that she had succeeded in forgetting that terrible scene. Now she was remembering. "What are you trying to do to me?" she cried. "Haven't I had enough to bear? Why do you hate me so? You want George, don't you? After I'm dead."

"Stop it! That's not true!"

"Of course it's true. Do you think I'm blind?"

"Helen—please, Helen, you must be quiet."

"What's the good of being quiet if I'm going to die?"

"You're not going to die!"

"I don't care. It doesn't matter. I don't want this baby. It's ruined my life already. It's given you a chance to get at George—"

"Helen, I don't want George!" cried Lydia, knowing that today at last it was true. "And anyway," she went on involuntarily, "George doesn't want me. He loves you."

Helen's stare grew quieter. She seemed to be weighing Lydia now, arriving at a judgment. "If I die," she said slowly, "there's no reason why you shouldn't have him. And be happy."

"I don't want—"

"Don't lie, Lydia."

"I'm not—I swear to you I don't—" And she broke off abruptly as Helen moaned and turned her face away.

The next thing Helen knew Lydia's voice was saying from the door, "I've called the doctor. He—"

"Why, I was asleep!"

"Yes, you dozed right off. You've slept nearly half an hour. I hated to wake you, but he wants you to go to the hospital. I called a cab and—"

"I don't want to go to the hospital!"

Lydia looked at her and her opened heart gave her clairvoyance. "Oh, my darling, don't be frightened!" she cried. "Nothing can hurt you! I promise!"

It was the old promise she had given often before to a little girl. Helen's face crumpled into weeping. She put her hand out and touched Lydia's cheek, and then they were both crying together.

Then the taxi horn hooted outside the window. "Oh, Lord, I must look a sight," said Helen.

"That's a fine thing to be worrying about now," said Lydia, laughing and mopping at her eyes. "Lie still and I'll get you a cold washcloth and a comb."

"Thank you, dear," said Helen, taking them, and they smiled shyly at each other.

IT frightened her, being there in that strange white bare room. What an ugly place to die!

Then suddenly there was a noise in the hall, at the door, and George stood inside, frightened into silence.

"Oh, my darling," he said, "you're suffering!"

"Maybe so," said Helen, "but I'm not infectious. You can come over."

"My poor baby, my poor baby!" He had her hand now. "I should be shot for making you go through this."

"That's taking an awful lot of credit for yourself, and it isn't all yours. Some of it's mine, and besides, it isn't the pain that kills you. The pain can't do anything to you. It's—"

"Oh, Rinehart, thank God you're here! I think she's delirious," and George retreated to the corner.

"Why don't you run downstairs and make sure all the records are filled out correctly?" said the doctor compassionately. The door let George out and Lydia in. Her face swam over Helen's head. It was the only sure solid thing in the room. She didn't take her eyes off it.

Then suddenly it was getting dark outside, and the doctor came in and said, "Why don't you see if you can sleep a little now?" And more capsules, and then she was alone, all alone in the deepening twilight.

The pain was worse now, more constant. Her head moved restlessly, and her lips were dry. It seemed as if she were being sucked faster and faster down a howling, black night sky. And the pain grew until there was nothing to her but pain, all of it dragging her down to the bright inhuman glory that waited in the dark.

Then the lights in the room were bright and beating on her eyes and there was a hypodermic needle in the doctor's hand, and then cotton-wool blackness, deeper and deeper.

When she woke it was almost night in the room. Something dark reared up in the corner, and from behind it came a light. It was like one of the Orthodox churches she had seen in the Balkans on the trip to Greece with Demmy. She looked at the shadow and the light, and all the days of the journey came back. Demmy! She remembered she had gone abroad once and met Demmy. They were to serve humanity together, passionately with their

minds; to love each other passionately with their bodies. No one had ever talked to her about passion before, so of course she married him.

And it hadn't been right. In spite of his talk, he never took all she had to give. The passion had mostly been in his words. Her body had obeyed his, even if only mechanically. But there were times when she felt she had to cry out against him.

And then he was killed. And there was that nightmare of hurrying and dizziness and incomprehension and horror. There was no better man than Demmy, no gentler, no finer. Good-by, Demmy, she thought; forgive me for everything. I should have loved you better. Good-by, good-by. . . .

. . . There was a bustle behind the screen, and the nurse came bursting out. "I'm all right," said Helen. "Everything's all right, but I want to cry."

"Go right ahead then," said the nurse. "There's no reason why you shouldn't if it makes you feel better. But if you stop in the next few minutes or so you can see your baby. He has to wake up for the six-o'clock feeding."

CHARLIE was waiting when George and Lydia returned to the house and at the sight of him Lydia felt she had lost all the new assurance that had come the day before with Helen's need of her. She just had to make an excuse and leave. Back in her own room she tried to think. She had helped Helen. She loved Helen, who had needed her so. They were sisters again, loving each other. But that did not settle anything, she realized. What was she to do now? What would happen; what did she have to make happen?

Suddenly she noticed she was still wearing her hat and coat. She started to take them off. And then Charlie called up to her from the hall below. The whole world shifted under her feet, her pleasant world, the conflicts with Helen dropped out, and George's friendship and dependence on her warm around her. It had been in short, pretty much the world she had lived in before Helen came home. But there was no place for Charlie in it, and Charlie was demanding entrance.

Nor could she keep him out. For she had given him power over her. I won't remember, she thought, I won't —but he was kissing her again as he had the other night. She wiped her lips, but no rubbing could remove the

memory of the contact. She had let him do that! Whatever happened, how could she ever look at him, ever speak to him again, across that memory? She tried thinking of him as a friend, as an acquaintance, letting him recede, recede, carrying all the dreadful emotions she had felt with him. It was possible, she thought. She must make him see that he must not encroach, that they needed space and time and solitude to form a setting for their meetings.

It was a year ago, she thought, staring into the dimness of the room, that I went wrong. I've been living here nearly a year. It was wrong. It was because I lost my independence. I couldn't trust myself any more. Maybe everyone else is right. But not for me. I don't want to live with anyone. I'll leave here when Helen comes back from the hospital.

She took a deep breath. Of course that was what she would do! Why had she ever hesitated to do it before? She would live by herself again, in her own place, in her own way, with her own thoughts. She could shut the door against the world and deal with only as much as she could manage. She would find her way back to the world that the sight of Charlie had shattered, and she would not let him frighten her out of it.

And now that she knew at last what she was going to do, she felt really relaxed at last. She felt so strong now that nothing could ever defeat her again.

ONLY George was allowed to see Helen that evening, so Lydia had to wait until the next afternoon. Charlie drove her over to the hospital and it hadn't been pleasant. But at last there she was going into Helen's room. Helen looked lovely and calm and happy. Her soft dark hair spread out on the pillow; her face was pale but rested and at peace. Lydia took a deep breath. Helen was here. Helen would understand.

Lydia sat down, holding Helen's hand. She felt much better already. "I went house-hunting yesterday," she said. "I took a place."

"Took a place? What place? What do you mean?"

"I rented a place to live. Remember old Mrs. Davis down on Elm Street? I've rented her garage."

"The garage!"

"I know it sounds silly, but it's just what I want. It used to be for the chauffeur, I guess. It's two rooms and a little kitchen—back from her house. You can hardly see the big place, the trees are so thick. It's really very private. I made her give me a seven-year lease. That way they can't turn me out at a moment's notice if anything happens to her."

"Seven years! That is a stretch. Johnnie can come and see you on his tricycle by seven years from now."

"Yes indeed," said Lydia, and they fell into silence.

Helen broke it at last. "That finally disposes of Charlie too, doesn't it?" she said. Lydia walked over to the bureau and took off her hat. Her fingers punched at her hair as she talked. "I—I guess I've made him unhappy. He was kind of pathetic just now, when he brought me over. And a little wild too. He threatened—he said he'd kill himself."

Helen blinked. She couldn't imagine him saying it, Charlie who was always so careful to wear his rubbers! And yet Lydia certainly wouldn't make it up. "My heavens!" she said. "What did you say?"

"Well, I just tried to make him more cheerful. I told him there was no reason why we shouldn't be friends."

"You didn't!"

"Of course I did! It's perfectly true. He—I—I'm sorry for him. And I feel—well—responsible."

"Oh, Lydia, you'll marry him yet. Responsible indeed!"

Lydia swung away from the mirror. "You're laughing at me. Don't you think I know my own mind?"

But Helen was laughing as if she were at a play. The very last of her fear and suspicion and resentment of her sister was carried off in that laughter. What an immense relief it was! Instead of hating Lydia she could tease her. She was warm all through from that laughter.

"I'm sorry," she said, wiping her eyes. "I won't say anything more about it. Not till your wedding day."

"Now don't start again, Helen." Suddenly she laughed too. "How long is it since you've teased me like that? It makes me feel twenty-five again. Don't do it, Helen. I'm an old woman." She went quickly to the door.

"SO SHE really seems quite happy now," said Helen. "As long as she doesn't have to bother to make a decision, she's happy. She's wonderful, really! A seven-year lease!"

"But, Helen, I saw him. She'd broken him all up. He looked ten years older. It may be funny to you, but, poor guy, I'm sorry for him. I don't say he's any prize—maybe she's right; but I have an idea how he feels right now. How do you think I felt?" He got up from the edge of the bed and walked restlessly over to the window.

"When? When you saw him? Were you embar—"

"You know what I mean. When you—went to Germany."

"Oh, George, that was a thousand years ago."

"I've loved you a thousand years, then."

"What a pretty speech to make with your back turned."

"It's not a pretty speech. You knew I loved you."

"Did I? I—I can't remember, George. Really, it was so long ago. It was a different person."

"I wish—you'd tell me something about it." There was a long silence and he turned, frightened. "Oh, darling, I didn't mean to hurt you! Forget about it. I'm a fool."

"No. It's all right, George. You should have asked me that long ago. That's been the one thing wrong, the one thing between us. You should have made me tell you. It was all my fault. I didn't want to think about it."

"Why should you? Why should you torture yourself?"

"I know," she said. "I made a scene the other night. I never will again. George, I'm all right now. I'm whole. I— Sit down, George, and hold my hand, and I'll tell you all about it, and if I cry, just remember I cry so easily.

"When I got back," she said, "it was like being shell-shocked. Then—just living, just quiet, covered my nerve ends up little by little, and all the unimportant things that happened wove a cocoon around me. A scarred place but healed over.

"But it wasn't healed underneath, because nothing had happened to heal it. I hadn't done anything. I'd just closed that part of my mind off, and nothing there had changed. It was all waiting, the wound and the memories. And being married again was something like being married before—see? Even the difference, the new happiness, brought the other back. But not in the open. In the back of my head. In dreams.

"Now it's all over. It's gone. I remembered it all when I first woke up out of the ether. And because I've remembered it all once, I can forget it now. I can talk to you about it, any of it, tell you what the house looked like and what Dammy was like and how he was killed. And once I've told you I can put it away. He was a good man, George. I want you to know that. And a very brave man. He was as good to me as he knew how to be. That's all, darling, that's all—just I love you as I never loved him." Her tears broke through and she cried in his arms, saying again and again, "It's over, all over. I love you!"

Until he said at last, "If you don't stop I'll think you're trying to convince yourself."

She stopped sobbing and finally caught her breath. The room was darkly cozy now, just the light by the bed.

"Did you notice how big Johnnie's hands are?" said George then. "Perhaps he'll want to be an engineer."

"Maybe he'll be a shortstop," said Helen, and they both laughed. "Seven years from now—he'll be so big. How funny of Lydia! I can just see her entrenching herself against Charlie behind that lease. 'What will I do with my things? My place? Fifteen dollars a month—' I teased her about him, but I suppose she'll keep him dangling forever now. For seven years, anyhow. Where will we be in seven years, George?"

"Right here. Doing the same things."

"Johnnie will be huge, and he'll have a little sister and a little brother. We'll be old married folks, and you'll be henpecked."

"Oh, will I! Who's boss? Now, who's boss? Say it; go on, say it!"

"You bully, you brute, to tickle me now! I'll tell the doctor."

THE END

BOOKS IN REVIEW

By JOSEPH ANTHONY

AMBER ST. CLARE, the heroine of **Forever Amber, Kathleen Winsor**'s historical novel, must have started life with a tremendous supply of virtue, for she begins to lose it in Chapter 2, and is still losing it at the end of the book, sixty-seven chapters later.

Miss Winsor's story takes place in the England of Charles II, who set for his obedient court the moral standards of an alley cat. Accordingly, there is plenty of justification for her portrait of a cynical and sex-crazed society. However, this reader, for one, would have been glad to take the author's word for it after two or three hundred pages, instead of almost a thousand.

Kathleen Winsor

Because of the length of this book, its undeniable vitality, and its beautiful, unscrupulous heroine, it invites comparison with Gone with the Wind. But Miss Mitchell's book, with its greater diversity of people and episodes, offered much more justification for its great bulk.

Forever Amber tells the story of a country girl's hunger for the elegant life of the lords and ladies of King Charles' court. To get what she wants, she goes from the arms of one husband and lover to another with all the smug self-satisfaction of a Horatio Alger hero climbing another rung on the ladder of attainment. She makes good in a big way, attaining the dizzy heights of the king's favor.

This quaint success story is offset somewhat by the fact that another woman gets the one man Amber ever loved. The ending would be an effective piece of irony if Amber were a thoroughly real character; but she is essentially just a symbol of the naughtiness of the Restoration era. For this reason her antics arouse no great indignation or sympathy, although they do evoke a continuing curiosity as to what the gal will be up to next.

Published by the Macmillan Co., N. Y. Price $3

CAN DO! by **William Bradford Huie** is the story of the Navy's Seabees (the name is derived from CBs or Construction Battalions).

The average age of the Seabees is much higher than that of the Army and Marine Corps, Mr. Huie tells, and for a time a favorite gag in the Pacific area was "Never hit a Seabee, for his son might be a marine." But the oldsters soon proved that they could handle their full quota of Japs in their own informal way while getting on with the main job of building a landing strip, putting a broken-down tank into commission, or making a new mold for a set of false teeth.

Lt. j.g. William Bradford Huie

A favorite story of the Seabees, says Mr. Huie, has to do with a goat left behind on a Pacific island by a party of hastily retreating Japs. The animal was a new one to the natives, and they went to their chief for instructions as to how to handle it. "What kind of beast is it?" the chief asked.

The reply was: "He has fierce eyes, long horns, a shaggy beard, and will eat anything."

"Don't kill him," said the chief. "He's what the Americans call a Seabee."

The outfit portrayed in Mr. Huie's lively book doesn't need traditions; it can make its own.

Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y. Price $2.75.

QUIZZ-ICAL CROSSWORD

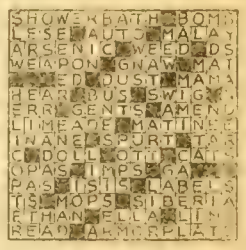
BY TED SHANE

HORIZONTAL

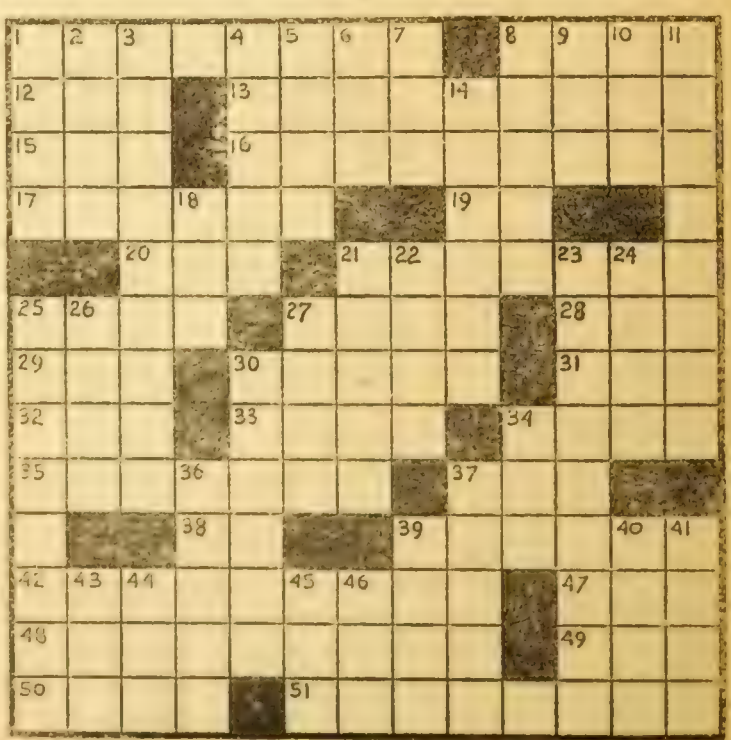
1 What office building has most floor space in the world?
8 What was the first name of Brinker, the ice-skate lad?
12 Lots of stuff about metal
13 What kind of oyster got mixed up in rationing?
15 Give the numerals contained in a Midwest state
16 What would a Scotch-and-sodajerk be?
17 Name Herman and Verman's great pal
19 A Canadian city begins and ends with what?
20 What Buddha did as he contemplated his navel
21 What militant oldtimer couldn't become a councilman until he was sixty?
25 Illegal in football
27 What's the Bermuda of the East Indies?
28 The Bunny-what was a dance of yesterday?
29 Give a synonym for an old battle-ax
30 Joan of Arc was burned in what city?
31 What do present cockneys cry?
32 What cape is Gloucester, Massachusetts on?
33 What Indian tribe was known for great architecture?
34 Vassili Shuiski was a Russian what?
35 What's a passive method of reducing?
37 A wisecrack in a highhat would be a what?
38 What pronoun is it inadvisable to use to the parents of a proud child?
39 Thread anagrams what dislike?
42 What, with ism, was a cause of World War II?
47 Name the Honest man of politics
48 According to the old lady's saw, in marriage what attract each other?
49 Name one New Deal policy Dewey didn't claim he'd retain as President
50 Taking lots of little whats helps defeat an incipient cold?
51 What Greek god is the Jap Navy now seeing lots of?

VERTICAL

1 Which deck sounds like an old fuddy duddy?
2 The building of what canal was a great election issue?
3 What are the brightest hangouts along Broadway? (2 words)
4 Name a church official
5 What kind of hand is a handshake called?
6 My becomes what after marriage?
7 Hairdressers, profiteers, and tenniseers are interested in a what?
8 A nation will fight when its what is assailed?
9 Help
10 Newfoundland's what direction from Boston?
11 Granters (anagram)
14 Who may be tried by a court of French generals?
18 What's a sentence in underworld lingo?
21 The secret of French cooking is said to lie in the what?
22 Leap (anagram)
23 Name one of London's most famed thoroughfares
24 What would an angel's housecoat be?
25 In reality, a superman is a what?
26 Complete: It's a long —— that knows no Turner!
27 An Australian bankrupt is said to go what?
30 Tiaras (anagram)
34 What can easily develop into a brat?
36 Cowfeterias are whats?
37 Hawthorne wrote Mosses from an Old what?
39 Home-fronters fought the war in 1942 with whats?
40 In the Spanish war, what was the River of Blood?
41 Complete: Dizzy and Daffy ——
43 A water hole with vitamins is a what?
44 Small town in Alabama
45 Complete this waiter's motto: The smaller the ——, the greater the sneer!
46 Name a dominant figure in Japan's modernization (assassinated, too)



Last week's answer



The answer to this puzzle will appear in next week's issue.

How to stop noise

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Then car production stopped, war production began. Soon tanks were pushing off for North Africa, and some of the world's toughest going, in steady streams.

The tracks on those tanks, endless chains of treads, had to be kept tight. Metal links wouldn't do. They wore down too fast. But our experts found that rubber bonded to steel did as good a job defeating wear as it had in stopping noise.

So with treads kept tight by special rubber-and-steel bushings, our tanks have kept rolling right along over all kinds of terrain. And the men who plugged away and sweated years ago until they made rubber stick to steel have helped to keep our tanks in action all over the world.

In all American industries, thousands of just such ingenious processes were developed because, in our country, men over the long past got just rewards for cracking tough problems.

This way of working helped make America the best place of all to live in. It aids the war effort at every point. And it will certainly produce more and better things for more people as time goes on.

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THE FRENCH THEY ARE A FUNNY RACE

Continued from Page 19

Anger came into the young eye of George Petersen, instant decision came into his mind and co-ordination into his muscles. He was up the three steps of the stoop in an instant. His large and indelicate hand seized the unsuspecting Raoul by the neck and wrenched him loose from the embrace so violently that the sailor crashed against the stone pillar of the doorway.

"George!" came from the anguished lips of the little girl with the brown curl.

"I'll attend to you in a minute," promised George, turning to face the enraged sailor, who was recovering. George let go a roundhouse right, but it never reached its mark, because Raoul made a half turn on the ball of his left foot and his right foot came up in a lightning-swift arc. There was a sharp crack as the shoe clipped George under the chin, and the pfc. went down like a ninepin.

"Stop it!" screamed Jeanne. "I command you to desist! All the two of you!"

George scrambled to his feet, rubbing a very sore jaw. "The dirty frog! Kicking a man in a fair fight—"

Jeanne had dived in between them. "It is Raoul!" she introduced the belligerents. "This is my betrothed," she said in French to Raoul, who made signs indicating he understood the reason for the American soldier's perturbation.

"I don't care who he is," declared George. "He can't kick me—"

"That is a method of defense of the self," said Jeanne. "It is the French *savate*."

Raoul said something rapidly in French, and Jeanne turned to George. "He says he regrets the occurrence, and trusts that your jaw is not too painful."

Raoul stood there smiling, waiting for this to sink in. He noticed that Jeanne's handkerchief had dropped on the stoop, and with all the gallantry of his race, he bent to pick it up. The motion turned him toward the street and placed, for a moment, a vital part of the French Navy in jeopardy. George's foot drew back and the kick, delivered accurately without benefit of Norden bombsight, set Raoul tumbling down the steps.

"Oh-h!" came from Jeanne.

George stood at the head of the steps and surveyed his work. Raoul sat on the cold stone below him, a look of mingled pain and surprise on his mobile countenance.

"It is the American *savate*," explained George pleasantly.

"You are both beasts beyond compare," said Jeanne, struggling between laughter and tears.

A window opened above them.

"My land!" exclaimed the old lady. "Whatever is going on down there?"

"Think nothing of it, grandmama," said Jeanne. "I have merely introduced two of my friends one to another."

RAOUL was a cousin of Jeanne several times removed on the mother's side, and when they were kids there was occasional talk in the families that sometime they would make a good married couple. As they grew older, the families moved away from the close proximity that had marked their childhood, and the tie seemed to grow a bit more tenuous.

Then came the war and some years of separation, and the slight tie gave way entirely. Jeanne had hardly thought of Raoul during this time, except with a pleasant nostalgia that had to do with

(*Continued on page 55*)

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TRADE-MARK

(Continued from page 52)

sailing boats in the Luxembourg lake, or a hot afternoon in the Parc Monceau.

She explained all this to George, who listened with gravity and tried to be quite understanding. Nevertheless he continued to be conscious of the fact that when he got his first look at this guy Rowell, he was kissing Jeanne.

At the table Jeanne tried to be all things to all men present, but the fact that neither George nor Raoul could speak each other's language was a handicap.

"Try some more of this cutlet of the veal," said Jeanne. She put another cutlet on George's plate.

"It's very good," said George. "Have you told Rowell that we're engaged?"

She nodded. "I have told him, and he is content." She turned to Raoul and spoke to him in rapid French. "My betrothed is not very pleased that we were kissing," she informed him with a smile.

"I cannot blame him," said Raoul. "It was exceptionally enjoyable. I trust we will have the opportunity to engage in it again quite soon."

"Why, Raoul!" she smiled as if he had said something exceptionally nice about George. "That will never be again."

"I know," said Raoul. "But I have always considered that you are to be my wife, and now that I see you once again, I am convinced it would be desirable."

"What's he saying?" asked George.

"We discuss various affairs," smiled Jeanne. "We have not seen each other since a long time, you must consider."

"Make it still longer since the next time," said George.

She turned again to Raoul, who wished to know what George was saying. "It concerns itself with Franco-American amity," said Jeanne.

"Good," agreed Raoul. "I wish to add that you are more beautiful than I had remembered."

He moved his chair a shade closer, and it did not escape George.

"I'm sorry to interrupt a family conference," said George, "but how do you say 'poke in the puss' in French?"

Jeanne considered. "To talk that way in French would be of a vulgarity extreme, so please do not be a drip."

Well, the meal was not much of a success, and with each of the men determined to outstay the other, there was a continual overtone of tension. The necessity to return to the post before taps finally caused George to make the first move.

He got up. "Don't they have taps in what the French call a navy?" he inquired.

"The ship is being overhauled," said Jeanne. "The men are in hotels for the time being."

Jeanne came to the downstairs door with George, letting her grandmother entertain the Frenchman. George took her in his arms and they kissed in a terrifically satisfactory fashion. When she finally pushed him away it was just because a girl has to breathe sometime.

"Please do not be so foolish about Raoul," said Jeanne.

"Sorry," said George. "I guess I must be just too nuts about you."

Jeanne shook her head. "It is not possible for you to be too nuts about me. Did you get a pass for tomorrow?"

He nodded. "Yes. I'll be in early. In the meantime," he looked at her significantly, "remember whom you belong to."

PFC. PETERSEN sat on his cot getting ready to leave the post, when the doorway was suddenly filled with the excessively large figure of Top Sergeant Cadwallader Simpson. Leaning against the doorjamb, Sergeant Simpson looked around him, a smile adorning his mouth.

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"Owing to an unfortunate set of circumstances, I need three volunteers for K. P.," he said. "Costanzi, Petersen, and Jenkins, report to the mess sergeant at once. Thank you very much. I knew I would meet with a ready response."

Knowing their doom was upon them, Costanzi and Jenkins said nothing, but the other volunteer, Petersen, responded with an animal cry of protest. "Now listen, sergeant—" he began.

"I'm sorry, Petersen," said Sergeant Simpson. "I know you have leave, but there's no one else available."

"I've got a date," said George.

"They call it a rendezvous when it's with a French girl," offered Private Jenkins.

"Sorry, Petersen," said Sergeant Simpson. "You have a rendezvous with two thousand eight hundred and fifty potatoes, to say nothing of the mess sergeant."

THAT'S why Pfc. Petersen was six and a half hours late getting to the house of Jeanne, the girl with the curl. And when he came, there was with him, in the nature of excess baggage in its most basic form, Privates Costanzi and Jenkins, both of whom had outspoken opinions concerning the fidelity of all French girls.

Grandmama met them at the door. "Oh, my goodness!" said she. "Jeanne's gone out. She didn't expect you any more. Nor your little playmates," she included the other two with a welcoming smile. "Don't you want to come in and wait?"

"Where did she go?" asked George.

"Well," said grandmama, "when she thought you wouldn't come any more, she decided to go for a walk. I think she might be at Grant's Tomb."

"That's fine," said Jenkins. "I always wanted to see Grant's Tomb."

So they went on up the Drive, and grandmama looked after them with a smile that had something troubled in it.

"I'll bet there are lots of people at Grant's Tomb today," said Jenkins.

"There always are lots of lonely soldiers and sailors there," agreed Costanzi, "dying for the sight of a pretty girl."

George gave them a dirty look.

When they arrived at the walk leading to the steps that ascended to the tomb, a crowd had just reached the bottom of them. Jeanne was at one side, and George caught sight of her at once.

"There she is!" he told his little playmates. "The one at the end."

"Solid number," offered Jenkins. "But isn't yon French mariner with her?"

Yon French mariner was assuredly with her, and by some odd chance which will be a surprise to nobody it was Raoul.

"'The French they are a funny race,'" hummed Jenkins.

This was too much for George, and he let go a Sunday left hook that would have lifted Jenkins clear across the Hudson to the Palisades if Costanzi had not deflected his aim. In a moment the three were rolling around on the ground, because playmates will be playmates, and that's when Jeanne discovered that George was indulging in violence.

"Why, George!" she squealed. George jumped to his feet, and all he saw in front of him was the face of Raoul, the French maritime menace. This time there was no one to deflect his aim and the Sunday punch landed flush on the Gallic jaw, sending Raoul sprawling.

There was a tap on George's shoulder. "Come with us, soldier," said the voice of authority. "You play too rough to be allowed off the leash." Two M. P.s stood, one on each side of the aroused pfc. Jeanne crowded in between.

"George!" she shouted.

George looked at her in silence. Then, without a word, he turned and went away with the military police.

IT is true that the case of the defection from fidelity of the person known as Jeanne, encompassed with a sailor of the French Republic, was not the fault of the said Jeanne, it being known that the sailor of the French Republic appeared suddenly at the house of the party of the first part without invitation (absolutely). Since both parties were cousins, and since Jeanne was the sailor's fiancée, once removed, most people would not have found anything sinister in the proceedings. When it became obvious that George would not appear to keep his appointment, neither Jeanne nor Raoul considered it anything out of the ordinary that they should go to Grant's Tomb, a place as public as the most strait-laced could wish for.

That did not alter the uncomfortable fact that George rested securely in the guardhouse, a clink de luxe. From this hermitage he refused to answer Jeanne's letters, or even to receive them, for they were returned unopened.

Jeanne cried. Grandmama attempted to solace her. Jeanne continued to cry. Raoul claimed he was desolated by the turn of events and would do everything in his power to rectify things, although he did not consider himself responsible.

IT is easier to get to see a general than a colonel, and it's easier to make a date with either than to pay a visit to a man in the guardhouse, especially when he sends out word that he never heard of you. Jeanne discovered all this, but she persisted in her belief that if she could only see the colonel in command of the post she would be able to make him understand the enormity of keeping George Petersen in the guardhouse.

The third day she appeared at the gate one of the sentries stopped her.

"Got a pass?" he inquired.

She shook her head brightly. "We are spies, this French sailor and myself," she said. "It is quite difficult for a spy to be successful here, is it not so?"

The soldier lowered the butt of his gun to the ground, which was against the regulations, but so was this good-looking girl. "Not at all," he told her. "What's your telephone number? I could call you up when I get in on leave and give you lots of information."

A sergeant came out. "What's goin' on?" he asked. "Does standing guard interfere with your social duties, Murphy?"

The gun came up with snap across the soldier's chest. "This spy—I mean, this lady wants to see the colonel. She's been here for three days running. Girl friend of Private Petersen's."

"Oh, that one," said the sergeant.

"Good morning, sergeant," said Jeanne, laying a trusting hand on his arm. "One knows now that action of the most quick will develop. It is a known fact that the Army is actually run by the sergeants. Am I right or wrong?"

"That will be all, Murphy," said the sergeant. "You're absolutely right," he said to Jeanne, "but it's funny how these things get out."

That was about the state of the matter a little later when Colonel Taswell seated himself at his desk and attempted to read the day's communications.

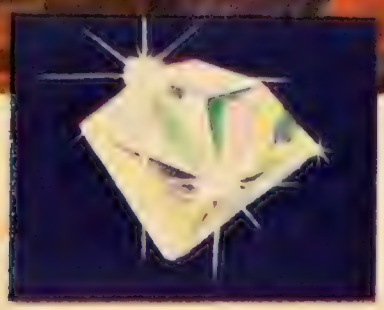
"What is it, sergeant?" He looked up at the staff sergeant who had entered.

"A Miss Martinson would like to see the colonel, sir."

"What about?"

"It's about Petersen, the baby who socked the French sailor, sir."

(*Continued on page 58*)



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(Continued from page 56)

The colonel's brow clouded. "No dice. There's too much roughhousing going on. I'm going to make an example of some of them. Especially when they wham our allies. Tell her to go away."

"She refuses," said the sergeant. "She says the information she has is very important. It's about our international relations. There's a French sailor with her, the one who got kayoed, I think."

The colonel groaned. "They'll make an international incident out of it."

"She's engaged to marry Private First Class Petersen," said the sergeant, "she says. Keen-looking job, too, sir."

Colonel Taswell banged the papers down on his desk. "All right."

Jeanne came in a moment later, looking very sweet and a shade helpless, an expression that had taken quite a bit of practice. Along with her was Raoul.

"Good morning, my colonel," said Jeanne.

"Good morning," said the colonel. He waved Jeanne and Raoul to seats. "What can I do for you?"

Jeanne looked around her as though almost afraid to speak in the presence of such greatness. She looked past the colonel to the corner desk, where Captain Hopely sat, fingering a multiplicity of papers. She caught his eye, and he smiled at her. It was difficult not to smile at Jeanne.

"You are the commanding officer of that fool colossal, George Petersen, who rests in prison?" Jeanne asked.

Colonel Taswell nodded. "Petersen has done something for which he must be punished," said the colonel. "What is your interest in him, may I ask?"

"Oh, I am well interested in him," said Jeanne. "He is the one whom I love most truly. George is actually a type most gentle, my colonel. It is only—"

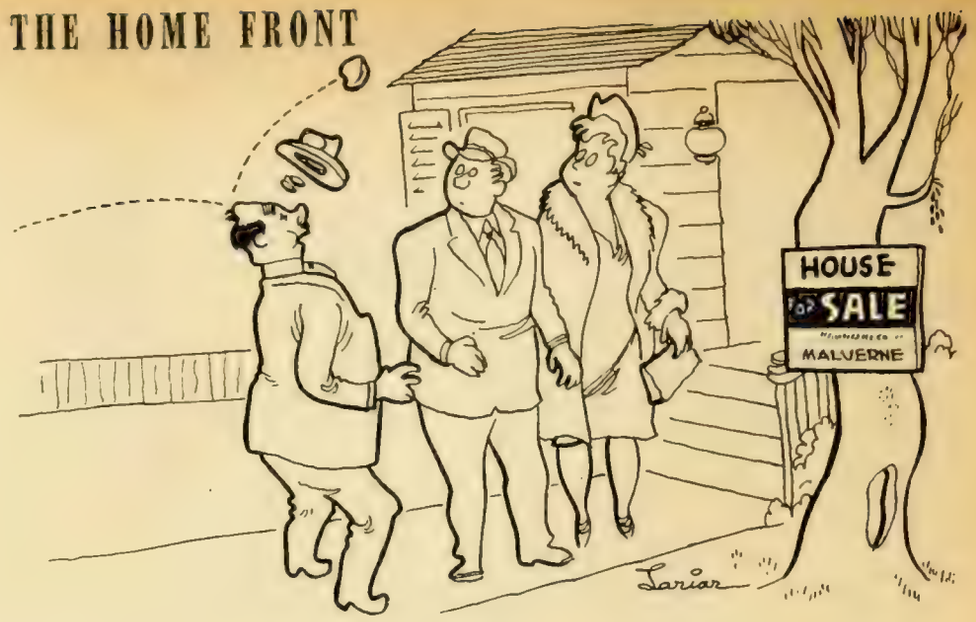
Here Raoul broke in with a torrent of French. "I don't understand a word of it," said Colonel Taswell.

"You do not understand the language French?" asked Jeanne. The colonel shook his head. A soft look passed swiftly through the eyes of Jeanne. She turned to Raoul.

"Tell him," said Raoul, "that although I have been most grievously insulted and although my jaw has been almost dislocated, yet I bear no ill will, and I trust that he will not be merciless with the scoundrel Petersen." He smiled genially.

Jeanne looked at the colonel. "You do not understand?" The colonel shook his head.

THE HOME FRONT



"And it's right within a stone's throw of a school."

"He says," translated Jeanne, "that the fault of the encounter was his own. He admits he struck the Private of the First Class Petersen with no warning, and that George was acting in defense of the self when he struck back."

As she spoke, Raoul nodded pleasantly. The colonel looked from one to the other.

"He struck him first? That puts another face on the matter."

"Yes, and a face most absorbing," added Jeanne. She turned to Raoul and asked him whether he was willing to call the whole thing off. He replied that he was.

"The sailor of France admits that he has a temper ungovernable and he regrets he was the cause of so much trouble," said Jeanne. "A vicious type," she added.

Raoul smiled with great geniality. The eye of Captain Hopely met the eye of Jeanne, and for a moment Jeanne's breath came fast. Then the captain smiled absently and went back to his paper work.

The colonel regarded Jeanne's nicely-cut young figure with approval and let his eyes rest on her lovely face.

He spoke to the captain. "No use magnifying an incident, I suppose. Have Private First Class Petersen released, captain."

He turned to Jeanne. "I hope he will be properly grateful to you, my dear."

"Oh, he will," said Jeanne.

When Captain Hopely caught up with them in the corridor, Jeanne asked whether the release would take effect soon.

"It will take place at once, mademoiselle," said the captain in French as good as hers.

"You are kind," replied Jeanne. "You understand French, then?"

The captain bowed. "I lived on the Rue du Cardinal Lemoine fifteen years," he said. He turned to Raoul. "I think the honor of the French Navy has been capably upheld today," he told him.

Raoul smiled and bowed. They shook hands. The captain went on his way.

That's how it happened that George Petersen was sprung from the guardhouse. He got a fair impression of the proceedings when, upon leaving the barred gate, he perceived Jeanne.

The moment after her arms went around his neck his will power wilted.

"Are you going to remember whom you belong to from now on?" inquired George.

"I am yours most firmly," said Jeanne.

"Well, remember that," said George. "Because, if any man lays a hand on you, except in anger, I'll just naturally kill him."

THE END

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ALASKA BECKONS— OR DOES IT?

Continued from Page 17

be grown because this permafrost is only nine inches down. But at Fairbanks very luxuriant growth is possible. And at Matanuska and along the coast in southeastern Alaska, a short but productive season assures the farmer bountiful crops.

It is true, then, that Alaska is not an iceberg; that it has a short but fast-growing season for farming, and that it has room for many, many more agriculturists. Splendid!

But—the main problem is how to market the crops. True, the wartime market has been better than ever before, thanks to huge volume sales to the war contractors and to the Army itself. Tons of vegetables have been unloaded to these purchasers without the usual problem of artificial cold storage, cleaning, and crating.

In times of peace, however, the situation is different. Then the farmers of the Matanuska and Tanana valleys have two markets—the near-by cities and towns, and, far greater, the mining companies of the interior.

Selling agricultural produce to city markets in Alaska involves three factors:

First, the Alaskan farmer must learn to co-operate with his neighbors in the matter of harvesting dates. At present the farmers outside of Fairbanks, for instance, do not alternate their plantings or their harvests to serve the market. The local groceryman has a standing order for shipments out of Seattle. These can't be canceled on a moment's notice; so, since he can't count on local produce in a steady flow throughout the summer, he lets his Seattle order ride. Then the Fairbanks grower comes in on top of the imported vegetables when his crop suddenly becomes marketable, and insists on receiving the same price for his produce.

The University of Alaska at Fairbanks is attempting to make the farmers see the light. Loren T. Oldroyd, director of the university's Farm Experimental Station, and Mrs. Lydia Fohn-Hansen, director of the Farm Extension Bureau, conduct cooperatives and form garden clubs in an effort to educate the growers of the region to the fact that they must get together for a profit. But the road is an uphill one all the way.

Second, the Alaskan farmer must learn how to prepare his produce for market. While making no concession in price, he nevertheless does not clean or properly package it. And it will take some time for local buyers to overcome their feeling that "outside" stuff is better because it is properly presented.

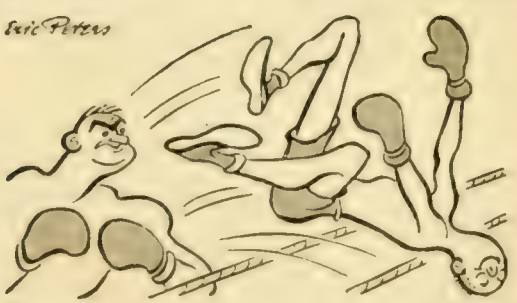
Third, the local grower must finance, erect, and maintain suitable artificial cold storage for his harvested vegetables so that he will not be obliged to jam the market during the short growing season. Further, green vegetables, except roots, are apt to spoil while awaiting shipment by air, since schedules are often delayed weeks before weather allows flight to the more remote mining locations. If the local grower could store his crops until needed, he would run no risk of surplus and spoilage.

The growing of grain on any large basis is deterred by two factors: millions of acres in the farming belt are covered either by trees or by seepage. To see Alaska from the air is to look into ten billion lakes, for permafrost is lurking below, and the oceans and rivers hem the land in on all sides. Thus chickens and eggs, which would normally be a good investment on this frontier, are very risky and expensive. Dairy herds are severely limited.

BUT don't give up, brother. Here's the way I like to look at Alaskan opportunities: First, know the shortcomings. Second, don't try to beat them singlehanded, but start out by going around them with your five thousand, or five hundred, or five dollars. In other words, don't take the obvious way in mining, fishing, or agriculture. Let me list the main shortcomings and then give you some ideas.

Alaska is dominated by the Department of the Interior—and Alaskans don't like Mr. Ickes and his colleagues. The Department owns the Alaska Railroad, and the railroad charges exorbitant rates for the gratification of showing a profit. This makes the cost of living high in the interior and discourages development. Alaskans have asked for statehood—and the single reason of high railroad rates is one crux of the statehood question.

Alaska is also controlled by Seattle business men, Seattle labor unions, and Seattle money—and Alaska doesn't like that either. In fact, the vast territory has been under the thumb of the West Coast ever since Uncle Sam bought it from Rus-



COLONEL STOOPNAGLE'S FICTIONARY

(Unabashed)

BOXYGEN: Fresh air for a prizefighter.

ASWORSTOS: Lowest grade of asbestos.

FILLY MIGNON: Mare steak.

BASSBAWL: Umpire with a deep voice.

INKQUIRY: Are we in the black or in the red?

NILE-ONS: Egyptian hose.

KATE'S MYTH: She thinks she isn't fat.

TELEGRIM: A dire wire.

FRIENDORSEMENT: Getting a pal to sign your note.

EE 9: The ninth one was gentle.

Peter Wood

THE author of Alaska Beckons—or Does It? has packed so many thrills into his life that he makes Superman look like Sad Sack! Born in Germantown, Pa., he ran away from home twice, but managed to stay put long enough to go to college and law school. After that he worked for an advertising firm, was bodyguard to a kid millionaire, a bartender, usher, inspector for Remington Rand, Labor Relations manager in Skagway, Alaska, and finally took his present job, head of the Alaska Information Service. In his own words, Wood says, "Am thirty-one, but life still has a tang!"

sia. First it was San Francisco, then Seattle.

The great pastime of "expediting" probably originated in Seattle, last American stop for ships before touching the sprawling Alaskan village of Ketchikan. There Alaskan storekeepers made their purchases. Then, because they could not afford to come south very often, they hired commission men to buy and ship for them. The journey was sometimes rough, and special crating was necessary. Pretty soon the Alaskan was advised of all sorts of additional expenses: he had to have his stuff ready to ship right on time, and the union truck drivers and swampers couldn't leave the trucks until their cargo was safely aboard.

Alaskan shipping became part and parcel of the Seattle unions. The steamship companies merged and became monopolistic, and the Seattle representatives were advised to use one line and only one, or wait for service on the next order. The Seattle unions, powerful and ambitious, thwarted the efforts of the resident workmen of Alaska to get their own charters and form their own locals.

ALL in all, Alaska pays through the nose to buy and ship out of Seattle, and it is not impossible that old Uncle Sam himself has kept it that way. If not, why is it that Alaska salmon, packed in Bristol Bay, has to be shipped to Seattle for inspection and shipped back for Alaskan consumption? No group of Alaskans has been able to break the hold of Seattle's big interests here. Why, to stop that ridiculous round trip would cut down the two-way shipping profits, the wharfage tax at Seattle, the handling costs at Seattle, and the reloading profits at Seattle! And I, living in a country abounding in salmon, would get it freshly canned for almost no cost at all!

The storekeeper in Alaska is forced to charge exorbitant prices for many articles, yet he does not make a killing. Seattle—the steamship companies, longshoremen's unions, and expediters—gets it, and the high-rate Alaska Railroad gets it. But the Alaskan, with a governor who is a Presidential appointee, without a vote in Congress. and powerless to fight back at the big interests, digs into his worn pockets and sighs a deep sigh.

But don't give up, brother. You can enter quietly and make a good living if you don't expect too much. Don't expect too much from the people, because they resent the introduction of new population unless it brings an investment along. Don't expect too much of the country and the weather—but don't be afraid of them. Don't expect to find a gold brick. Just settle down and get into any old job until you can get your bearings.

Then hit your problem with everything you've got.

Remember one cardinal rule: Always try the agencies which are set up for your benefits *first!* The U. S. Employment Service of Alaska has been operating for six years and its employees are handpicked to help you.

Now, here are a few ideas to work on:

Big company representation. The biggest field for employment in Alaska after the war will be in the introduction of new companies and new industries. Hundreds of big companies are crying for representation in the northland. Many homes are without modern comforts and already manufacturers' representatives are having a field day.

You can make your opening two ways. Write to likely companies before you come up, offering to travel for them, or get on the scene and study the community needs; then write back to the States in an Alaskan postmarked envelope.

Boat repair. This field is almost untouched, and since fishing is one of the Big Two industries of Alaska, there is good opportunity here. The old-timers fix their own boats and nets. But they would pay well if you would do it for them. Ketchikan is the salmon center, Cordova the crab-fishing port, and Petersburg is the shrimp capital. Juneau and Anchorage have their fleets and offer other boat-repair opportunities, too. Fourteen miles out of Juneau is beautiful Auk Bay, the summer resort of the Alaskan capital city. Pleasure craft line the shores, and vacationists here would undoubtedly welcome calkers and boatbuilders and repairmen.

Bristol Bay, world-famed for its great salmon catch, is a lure and a delusion to many. Its barren shores and stinking red canneries belie the romance and glamor that have become attached to its name, probably because of the legendary fortunes amassed here each season. It is not a civilized region, however, and Anchorage is headquarters for its activity.

A great mecca for sportsmen in coming years will be the Kenai Peninsula (pronounced keen-eye), and opportunities here depend entirely upon the individual. It offers wild and beautiful country with much game and streams filled with game fish. It surrounds the little town of Seward, the southernmost tip of the Alaska Railroad.

Building trades. Alaska is due for a great building boom, and the man who is handy with tools can either work for individuals or for large companies now being formed. The older towns need rebuilding from one end to the other. Fairbanks, the glamorous city in central Alaska, actually is a city of old sagging log structures and false-front stores. To date there is no FHA office in Fairbanks, and the few houses built there before the war were financed out of Juneau and Ketchikan. So you see the building trades have a big job ahead of them.

Aviation. The field of aviation maintenance should be hot after the war. Many Alaskan communities today exist only because of air transportation. And while the big companies in aviation are grabbing for the franchises, few of them want the out-of-the-way runs. You may see an occasional article on Alaska aviation which pokes fun at the many seemingly antiquated aircraft seen on Alaskan fields. But just remember that these planes are still in use because they serve a definite purpose. It's not because the air companies can't afford newer equipment. Through the years the bush pilots of the north country have come to know just

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how much lift, at what speed, with what maximum load, under what weather conditions a plane can fly the valley routes of the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, the Koyukuk, and the Susitna rivers. For example, "Shell" Simmons, flying the Juneau-Skagway route over Mendenhall Glacier and up the Lynn Canal, would rather take a twelve-year-old Curtiss Kingbird with two Wright engines than risk a dead-stick landing on the water with the newest commercial seaplane. He knows the treachery of the riptides that converge at Haines and the ground swell that races upon the Skagway docks.

So some of these planes may look like junk heaps, but from a business angle it'll be good for you. These babies must be kept in top repair at all times.

Office jobs. The more new businesses there are established in Alaska, the more services will be required. Public stenographers are few and do a land-office business in hotels where business men stop. Window cleaning, auto wash, and janitor services go begging, though they bring good money. The shoe-repair business is always good. There are hundreds of little towns which aren't bigger simply because no initial efforts have been made to set up little businesses designed to build the community.

Incidental agriculture. There are acres and acres of wild elderberries growing on the hillsides around the seacoast. Why couldn't you study up on the subject and start a cannery or a winery? Millions of delicious mushrooms are free for the picking in Alaska. (Orange Delicious and Boletus prevail.) You could add to your job income by drying a few hundred pounds for shipment to the States (light weight, low cost). Blueberries and low bush cranberries, salmonberries and huckleberries are common. Help yourself.

A smart move would be to enroll at low cost in the University of Alaska for work in the Farm Experimental Station. They *want* you to. Contact either Dr. Charles E. Bunnell, president of Alaska U., or Loren Oldroyd, director of the Farm Experimental Station.

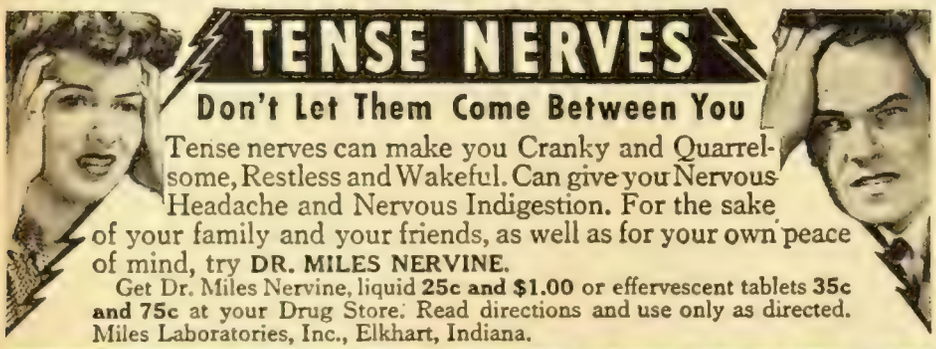
A good way to meet the problems of agriculture in the northland would be to hire out as a farm hand anywhere you could get on. For room and board and a small monthly salary you could see first-hand just what the fight must be. Then, when you know, there are literally millions of acres for small cost or for homesteading. But, once again, don't come barehanded and broke.

Mechanical work. This is one of the best fields, because Alaska survives only as its transportation systems survive. Truck and tractor mechanics will find work in cities, at mines, in repair stations along the highways. And when you become acclimated, strike out for yourself! Thousands of roadside stations are needed. Start with a shack and your bare hands.

There are many, many spots where you can be your own boss and get rich, too. You'll be very much surprised at the easy city life in Alaska. But never lose sight of the fact that to make your way best in this country, you must come up to be a pioneer, not a hanger-on.

You can make it, brother—if you are serious about it!

THE END



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YOU'RE WINNING THE WAR AGAINST INFLATION

Continued from Page 23

controls are working steadily better as we learn to apply them more skillfully.

The second favorable influence is one that cannot be measured statistically, but it is by long odds the most important of all. It is the spirit of the people.

There is growling and grumbling, of course. There are black markets. There are some pressure groups—labor groups, employer groups, farm groups—trying to bludgeon the rest of the country into giving them an advantage over everybody else. They make a great deal of noise and attract much attention. But at present they are not really important, except as a threat. The great bulk of the American people have accented the controls cheerfully and loyally. That is why they work, and as long as that is the attitude of the people they will continue to work.

There is a final factor in the situation that is undoubtedly significant, but whether it is favorable or unfavorable is anybody's guess. Civilians in this country have hitherto been hit very lightly, in comparison with what has befallen the people of other countries. Taxes are heavy only in comparison with what we were accustomed to pay, not in comparison with what other countries are paying. Except for gasoline, rubber, and a few items shut off altogether, our rationing has been downright extravagant in comparison with that of, say, the British. Controlled wages and controlled profits have both been set at pretty generous levels.

In 1943 the American people spent twenty-three billions more than they spent in 1941. Taking into account an increase of 28 per cent in the cost of living, this means that they lived just about as well in 1943 as they did in 1941, which is a very high standard of living. Our people have had to surrender none of the necessities, not many of the comforts, and not all of the luxuries of life since the war began.

With reference to the future, you may regard this situation in either of two ways. You may fix your attention on the fact—and it is a fact—that Americans have not been subjected so far to any severe test of their endurance, yet some of them are already sour and clamorous. From this you may infer, not without reason, that if and

Gerald W. Johnson

IT'S not very often that a newspaperman stacks up a pile of sheepskins, including a B. A., Litt. D. and an LL. D. But Gerald W. Johnson, author of You're Winning the War Against Inflation, is both a newspaperman and a scholar. He was an editorial writer for the Baltimore Sun for seventeen years and has written thirteen books, several of which are studies of the South, and one, Dictator or Democrat? an evaluation of President Roosevelt. Johnson has now retired from the world of the deadline and the "beat" and devotes all his time to writing. His most recent contribution is the text of Woodrow Wilson, published by Harpers.

when the real pinch comes they are likely to collapse.

On the other hand, you may fix your attention on the fact—and it is a fact—that while they maintained their standard of living last year, the people, with money in hand, voluntarily forewent any determined effort to raise it.

To sustain this, one must look at figures again. In 1943 the income of this nation was about fifty billion dollars greater than it was in 1941. Of this, fourteen billions went for increased taxes. Thirteen billions went merely to maintain the standard of living where it was. This leaves twenty-three billions unaccounted for. It was paid to the people, but it did not show up in the market. What became of it? The answer is savings—war bonds, life insurance, payment of private debts, savings-bank deposits. Out of their extra war earnings the people put more than two thirds into taxes and savings.

Surely this argues that they are not altogether blind to the realities of the situation. If they are capable of acting sensibly now, when the pressure is relatively light, why assume that they will lose their heads if it increases? Is it not as logical to assume that as the realities become sharper, their perception of them will become proportionately sharper? The test that we have passed triumphantly was a relatively easy test; nevertheless, we have passed it. Make what you will of that.

Recently the effort to keep the public in touch with the realities of the situation suffered under a temporary but very serious handicap—to wit, politics. In every campaign year a great many astute minds devote their energies to establishing general belief in things that are not so. Politicians of the majority party attempt to grab credit for anything good; politicians of the minority party try to convince us that nothing that happens in Washington is good. Both do their earnest best to mask the truth.

IT seems to be a fact that up to the present we have controlled the trend to inflation much more effectively than many people dared hope we might. But the assertion of Democratic spellbinders that the relative success is due entirely to the sapience and puissance of the Democratic Party is hooey of purest ray serene. On the other hand, the assertion of Republican spellbinders that in Washington all is confusion, futility, and incompetence is also hooey. The fact is, the war has drawn to Washington a class of men rarely found there in time of peace—able, honest, successful men, some Democrats and some Republicans, but rarely strong partisans

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and practically never spellbinders. They are there to do what is necessary to win the war. They are doing it, and the war is being won.

But this is precisely what the enemies of democracy confidently predicted could never happen. Much has been written of the disasters that will follow if inflation bursts from control, but curiously little has been said of what will happen if it doesn't.

What will happen if our efforts continue to be successful and we hold the line, not only until the fighting ends, but until our productive facilities are ready to resume supplying civilian demands again? From the economic standpoint, nothing. But nothing is precisely what most of us want to happen to our economic system—that is, nothing calamitous. To be sure, it needs improvement, but we were in the way of improving it, little by little, when the war interrupted the work.

If we hold down inflation we shall be able to keep our word to the millions who have paid good money for war bonds and who are entitled to receive equally good money when they mature; and to the soldiers who have bought government insurance on the same understanding; and to the widows and orphans, whose pensions must not be paid in worthless paper. Economically, the situation will remain as it was if inflation is controlled; in that sense, nothing will happen.

But politically the change will be enormous. If we fight a great war and at the same time control inflation more successfully than the Germans or the Japanese—better, indeed, than most of our allies, as we have done so far—then we shall have given a demonstration of democracy in action that will be stunning to the opponents of our system. For inflation cannot be controlled without the exercise of two qualities—intelligence and discipline, which our enemies deny that we possess. The whole philosophy of totalitarianism rests upon the assumption that the people, left free to choose, will not follow intelligent leadership and cannot discipline themselves. Disprove those assumptions and all the rest collapses.

OVER and over we have heard it proclaimed that this war is a collision not so much of nations as of systems. Hitler himself has declared that it is a contest between two worlds; an inevitable conflict, because there is not room upon earth for both, and the more efficient must survive. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have both asserted that we are destroying the German armies merely as a preliminary to our real objective, which is the destruction of the Nazi idea.

But you cannot shoot an idea, or bayonet it, or sink it with naval guns. The only weapon that will destroy it is a better idea. A demonstration that democratic government is stronger, more flexible, more efficient, and more intelligent than despotism is the only way to rid the world of the idea that despotic government can succeed. Throughout history, inflation has been the terror of every nation at war, regardless of its form of government. For a democracy to be the first to cope successfully with that terror would be a psychological victory of incalculable importance.

But if this victory is won, it will not be won by Mr. Roosevelt or any of his successors, and not by the Republican Party or the Democratic. It will be won by anonymous civilians, by you and me, for in this part of the fight we, and not the uniformed forces, are the troops in the front line. If we hold, we shall serve ourselves well; but in addition we shall make our nation so strong in the eyes of the world that it may reasonably hope to enjoy a long, unbroken peace.

THE END

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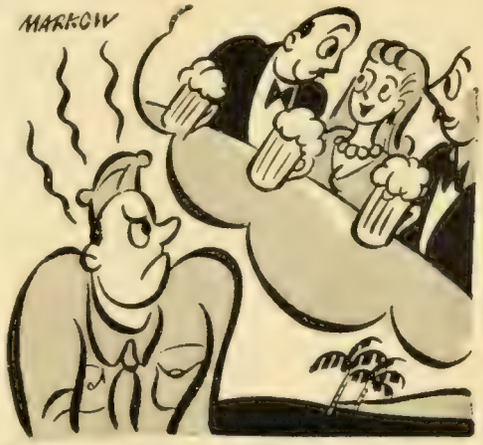
THIS MAN'S WAR

CONDUCTED BY OLD SARGE

I'M still receiving a few gripes from readers who suspect the 1944 model G. I. is "over-decorated." I disagree with that—and so, I think, will any battle veteran of the last war who recalls how bare his own blouse was, compared with that of some beribboned, bemedaled and bewhiskered French poilu with whom he split a bottle of *vin rouge* in a village estaminet.

But you don't have to take my word. I'm going to quote from a very clear-cut explanation of the present Army policy



He's threatening

on decorations given recently by General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff.

"It has been my opinion," the general wrote, "that one of the grave errors of the previous war was our ineffective policy in the award of decorations and our military policy regarding campaign ribbons. We seemed to begrudge prompt recognition of the men who did the fighting, suffered the hardships, and took the losses.

"After the war, the attempt was made to correct this, but, as might have been expected, more of the importunate than of the modest and deserving received these belated awards, and heavy political pressures usually were involved."

So this time, General Marshall said, he had stressed upon field commanders "not only the value of decorations and their proper use, but the necessity for their prompt bestowal.

"It is my sincere belief," the general summed up, "that we cannot do too much in the way of prompt and appropriate recognition of the men who carry the fight and live under the conditions that exist at the fighting front.

"I intend to see that these young soldiers enjoy this small fruit of their military effort while they are among their war comrades and confronted with the ordeal of further fighting."

Speaking of awards, here are two new ones:

Submarine Combat Patrol Insigne. A miniature submarine, worn on the left breast, and awarded to Navy officers and seamen regularly assigned to submarine duty who complete one or more patrols during which at least one enemy vessel is sunk or a combat mission of comparable importance is accomplished. One gold star may be added for each additional successful patrol, and one silver star may be added to represent five successful patrols.

Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. Awarded to service regiments, service battalions, service companies, and similar Army, corps, division, and A. A. F. service units of forty officers and men or more, for superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks and for maintenance of a high standard of discipline. Members of units receiving the award may wear a special insigne so long as they remain with the outfit. The insigne is a golden-yellow laurel wreath, worn four inches above the end of the right sleeve of coat or shirt.

OLD SARGE.

* * *

Recently I saw a reference to "staging areas." Can you tell me what they are?

H. R., New York, N. Y.

A staging area is a camp where troops receive a final checking over, and are issued any needed items of clothing and equipment, before being sent to a Port of Embarkation.

* * *

Sarge, because I like a glass of beer and a bit of fun after work with some of the girls and fellows from my war plant, snooping neighbors have been telling tales, via the mail, to my G. I. husband overseas. He's threatening to cut off my allotment. Can he do that? Also, would it be possible for me to volunteer his services for duty in the Army of Occupation after the war? He's contributing more to my support now than he ever did before he was drafted. I hope the Army keeps him—at least until he learns a trade and steadier habits. Meanwhile, I'm going to have my friends—and to heck with critics!

Sociable Annie, Paterson, N. J.

I'm printing this letter as an example of the extra load some of our servicemen have to bear amid the hell of war. Postal regulations being what they are, I can't discuss this as I'd like to.

I regret to say the husband has no present power to discontinue the wife's allotment of $50 monthly, $22 of which comes out of his pay. Section 104 of the Servicemen's Dependents Allowance Act of 1942 provides that the legal wife of an enlisted man—or the divorced wife, if granted alimony by a court—is entitled to collect a family allowance, with or without her husband's consent.

This has brought many protests. An amendment has been introduced by Senator Lucas (D., Ill.), which would stop payments to wives who desert their service husbands or are convicted of immoral conduct. I would like very much to see this or similar legislation passed.

Needless to say, when regulations for manning an Army of Occupation come through, they will provide for the soldier to do his own volunteering if he wishes to remain overseas.

* * *

I served in the Army from October, 1942, until the following February, when I was one of those over thirty-eight released to accept essential defense employment. Am I considered a veteran? Am I entitled

(Continued on page 68)

Nation Re-born

Philippines on way to freedom

1860 **CONQUERED BY SPAIN** in the 16th Century, the Philippines, 7,000 islands, 1,152 miles from north to south, were finally opened to trade with other nations in Corby's second year as a whiskey name in Canada.

1896 **STILL UNDER SPAIN,** the Filipinos rose in vigorous revolt around Manila and Cavite. The Spanish War brought the Islands under U. S. jurisdiction with promise of freedom. This was in Corby's 40th year of fame in Canada.

1935 **THE PHILIPPINE COMMONWEALTH** was formed and complete independence scheduled for 1946. The "blackout" of freedom under Japan poses new problems for Filipinos in this, Corby's 86th year of great tradition as a whiskey name.

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PRODUCED IN U. S. A. *under the direct supervision of our expert Canadian blender.*

A nation will some day be re-born in the Philippines. And as we all work here at home to safeguard our own futures, you may want to high-light an occasional leisurely evening with your favorite drink made with Corby's. This light, sociable whiskey will be available more and more frequently. So watch for your chance to try this whiskey with the grand old Canadian name.

86 Proof—68.4% Grain Neutral Spirits
Jas. Barclay & Co., Limited, Peoria, Ill.

(Continued from page 66)
to mustering-out pay and the other privileges veterans receive?

Ex-Pvt. P. O., Napa, Calif.

You are not entitled to mustering-out pay, since Congress specified that those discharged at their own request to enter essential employment should not be eligible for such pay. But you are a veteran and are entitled to all other privileges of an honorably discharged soldier.

* * *

My brother, a marine corporal, fell in love with a New Zealand girl who has promised to marry him. He is now elsewhere in the South Pacific, but hopes to get a furlough and return for the wedding. Is there any way he can get his New Zealand bride to the United States then?

Mrs. K. E., Vallejo, Calif.

Marriage, of course, does not confer citizenship. Application will have to be made to the American consul for her admission to this country under quota. Such quotas are seldom, if ever, full these days, so there should be no difficulty on that point. However, she may have to wait a bit for transportation.

* * *

A friend of mine, an excellent dentist in Mexico who received part of his education in the United States, wishes to join the Dental Corps of the U. S. Army. Where could he make application?

D. R., Chicago, Ill.

Unfortunately, the application of this good neighbor cannot be considered. All applications for commissions must come from persons residing in the United States.

* * *

How about this infantryman's combat pay of $10 per month extra? Is an officer entitled to it as well as an enlisted man?

Ranger Lieutenant, Camp Butner, N. C.

Qualified officers may wear the Combat Infantryman Badge, but Congress, in its act of last June 30 authorizing additional pay to holders of the badge, specified that only enlisted men are entitled to the extra pay created. Same goes for officers holding the Expert Infantryman Badge, though enlisted wearers of the latter get $5 extra.

* * *

This question has caused argument in my overseas company. Would not a bullet fired horizontally from the gun of an airplane traveling 300 miles an hour travel at a higher rate of speed than one fired from a gun stationary on the ground?

Sgt. D. S. P.,
c/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y.

Yes, the bullet fired from a plane would go faster. For its speed, add the speed of the plane to the bullet's own velocity.

* * *

If a man has a general court-martial (first offense) in his record, will he be able to get an honorable discharge after the war? The man is serving time now, but will be restored to duty with six months' probation.

Seaman X, Philadelphia, Pa.

If the man makes good after returning to duty, the general court sentence will be suspended and at the end of the war he will receive an honorable discharge.

* * *

I was in World War I for fifteen months and I've also had more than twenty-one months in World War II. Does my earlier service count toward longevity pay, or must each Army hitch amount to three years before I can claim the 5 per cent extra pay due for a first fogey?

G. C., New York, N. Y.

Under AR 35-2360 and the Pay Readjustment Act of 1942, your World War I service can be computed with your present service in figuring longevity. You therefore have a total of three years, or one fogey, and can claim 5 per cent extra pay now.

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Bring Our Boys Back Sooner—
Buy and Keep, More War Bonds!

THE LIE

Continued from Page 33

He was doing something worse—he was crying and he couldn't help it.

Desperately he looked around for an escape. He started to run for the street gate. But there were too many and they were too quick. Before he could get half the way six of them had him surrounded.

"Frankie's crying! Yah, he's crying! His old man went away and now he's bawling!"

They all crowded closer and took it up. "Frankie wants his daddy—Frankie wants his daddy!" "He's crying for his old man—he's crying for his old man!"

The boy fought down panic. He gritted his teeth. Each shrill jeering voice was a knife passing through him. Something—he didn't know what—had to be done. "You kids are crazy!" he blurted out. "I guess you'd cry too, if—if—"

"Yah, if what?"

"If—" He looked around him and drew a deep breath. The words came out before he knew it, born of his desperation. "I guess you'd cry, too, if your grandpa just died!" he said.

Their stunned silence was gratifying. It was permissible to cry if someone was dead. They all recognized that. They were filled with a new respect, but still they hemmed him in.

"What made him die?" one asked.

"Rheumatism," the boy answered promptly. "Rheumatism and a dry throat."

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

"So you're getting married?" the medical officer at Camp Cooke, California, said as he handed Sergeant Harold C. Vogler a premarital physical-examination certificate.

"No, sir, not necessarily," the sergeant replied. "But I'm going on a furlough and I thought I'd like to take this along—just in case."

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

"Your husband *will* use this one, ma'am. It's our doorknob tie rack."

"I seen him yesterday, sitting on your porch and drinking beer!"

"You can die in a day, can't you?" the boy argued fiercely.

Sister Monica, patrolling on yard duty among her young charges, paused and surveyed in dismay the boy's red swollen eyes. "Is something the matter, Frankie?" she asked.

"His grandpa just died," one of them told her.

"He died in a day," another said.

Sister's eyes widened in sympathy. "Oh, Frankie, I'm so sorry!" she said gently. "Poor Mr. Logan! When?"

"J-just a little while ago," Frankie told her miserably. "I just found out."

"The poor man! Father McGowan was with him at the end, I hope?"

"Oh, sure. Him, and Dr. Bullwinkle, and—" The boy's voice trailed off in a sob.

SISTER Monica laid a hand on his shaking shoulder. "You go home now, Frankie," she said. "You don't have to stay in school today. Perhaps you can help your mother. And don't feel too badly. I'll go into the church right away and pray for the poor man's soul. We all will."

The boy nodded gratefully. The crowd around him stepped back and watched in silence as he made his way to the gate. Once in the street, he turned automatically toward home. His lunch sandwiches were untouched in the paper bag he carried, and the nickel in his pocket for candy didn't matter now. Nothing mattered except his disgrace. In another few hours they would be out of school and, because it was a lovely sunny day, Grandpa would be on the porch as they passed by. The word would spread. They'd know then the real reason he was crying. It wouldn't be hard to guess. The whole neighborhood would know.

As he turned in from the street, Grandpa looked up from the sporting page of the morning paper and took his feet down from the porch rail. Then he pulled his glasses down on his nose and looked again, to be sure. "And what would you be doing out of school this early, Frankie?" he asked.

"They let me come home," the boy said. His eyes stayed on Grandpa appealingly. "Are you going to sit out there all afternoon?" he asked.

"Would you have me stick in the house

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NEVER BEFORE SO FINE A PEN AT SO LOW A PRICE

on a fine May day?" countered Grandpa.

The boy sighed. "No," he said, "I guess not. Anyway, they'd see you tomorrow."

"Who would?" snapped Grandpa. "Are you telling me now I'm not fit to be seen?"

"It ain't that you're not fit," the boy answered. "It's just that—" He paused and shook his head sadly. "I got in a little trouble, Grandpa," he said.

Grandpa's white head bobbed. "To be sure you have. You're a Logan. I remember once when your father was little. He—" He pulled the glasses down on his nose again and looked at the boy. "Bad enough trouble to make you cry, was it?" he said. "What did you do to them or they to you?"

"It's something I did to you, Grandpa," the boy said mournfully.

"Lord save us!" said Grandpa, reaching down for a bottle of beer. "You've never been anything but a fine grandson, Frankie, bringing me beer here on the porch and running errands and—"

"I told everyone you were dead," the boy said.

Grandpa, bottle to his lips, choked.

"Dead, is it?" he roared. "Why should you be killing your own grandfather? And how?"

"I said you died of rheumatism and a dry throat."

"Heaven forbid!" Grandpa shuddered at the thought and raised the bottle again. "A horrible end!"

"I said Father McGowan was with you when you died," the boy went on. "All the sisters are in church now, praying for your happy repose."

"I'm thankful to you for saving my soul," said Grandpa gravely. "And now will you explain this nonsense you're talking?"

SO the boy told all—how tears came despite all he could do; how he was surrounded, a crybaby before the whole world because his father had gone to far-off China; how he'd had to do something. And suddenly he was a crybaby again, his face turned away from the street and the tears streaming down it. "My dad thinks I'm brave, and I ain't!" he sobbed. "And now somebody'll write him and he'll find out. Oh, I guess I ain't any good! I ain't any good at all!"

Grandpa sat without a word, his blue eyes thoughtful and his bottle forgotten in his hand. Now and then he glanced at the crying boy on the steps, but he offered no softening word of sympathy. Instead, anger began to come into his eyes. He ran his hands furiously through his bristling white hair. And finally he threw out his arms in a gesture of utter despair. "Trapped, b'gad!" he moaned. "Trapped, neat as you please!"

"Are you mad, Grandpa?" the boy sobbed.

Grandpa pushed himself to his feet. "Mad?" he cried. "Don't you know what you've done?" He walked slowly to the front door. "Now get me a cold bottle of beer and have it here when I come back."

The boy brought the beer and sat again on the steps and waited. His sobbing was softer, but his hurt was no less intense. His shame drew closer with each passing minute. School would be out in an hour. His friends would pass the house and Grandpa would be back in his chair by that time, no corpse at all, but a ruddy little man with a pipe in his mouth and his feet on the porch rail.

Only half an hour remained when the car drew up at the curb. Father McGowan jumped out and ran up the steps. "Frankie!" he cried. "Sister Monica just told me! Was it his heart, the poor man? In heaven's name, why didn't you send for me in time? Where's your mother? Why didn't she—"

He ended abruptly. Grandpa stood in the doorway, dressed in his Sunday suit and carrying a valise in his hand.

Father McGowan stared. "Dan! Frankie said in school—"

"I know." Grandpa's voice was still gruff, but there was a tenderness in it the boy had never noticed before. "I'm dead of rheumatism and a dry throat."

"Are you going somewhere, Grandpa?" the boy asked.

"To be sure I'm going!" Grandpa growled. "What else can I do now? If Father McGowan will drive me to the other end of town I'll get the bus from there. No one will be seeing me." He looked down at the boy unsmilingly. But he winked.

"For all those kids in school will ever know," he said, "I might as well be dead and the remains shipped back to Elkins for decent burial."

"But, Grandpa—" New hope surged in the boy as he began to understand. "Grandpa, where will you go?"

"Where can I go," said Grandpa sadly, "except to your Aunt Margaret in Elkins, who won't let a bottle of beer in her house and who'll have me back behind a lathe in the plant an hour after I get there?"

"But your rheumatism, Grandpa?" the boy asked.

"Can a dead man have rheumatism?" countered Grandpa.

"And can he have a dry throat, Dan?" asked Father McGowan.

Grandpa's blue eyes danced. "That's something else again," he said. "Don't be asking too much of the lately departed." He leaned over and picked up the boy and kissed him. "Good-by, Frankie," he said. "God bless you, lad! It was a lovely visit—while it lasted!"

THE END

"He's on his lunch hour!"

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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

AMBUSHES IN THE SKY

Continued from Page 13

formation, and he could always be depended upon to use the same tactics, coming up slowly, holding his plane level, and aiming deliberately. At a range of from 1,000 to 1,200 yards, Limpy would bob along, lobbing twenty-millimeters into tail-end Charley until he got him or until friendly escort came to drive him off.

Perhaps one pilot in a hundred is able to manipulate, to throttle back enough, and fire his guns at the same time with enough precision to hold this position, but Limpy could do it, and it was rough on tail-end Charley when he came along. One defense was evasive action, plenty of maneuvering to help bring the Fort's guns into play.

The most despicable of the Boche's tactics are his coyote prowlings. Instead of coming in for a fair fight, the enemy formation will hold off at a safe distance until ground installations cripple a ship with their flak guns. When the crippled ship is forced to quit the formation, they all gang up on it, shoot it down, and then follow along, like coyotes trailing a buffalo herd, waiting for the aged, the sick, and the injured.

The Boche has other stratagems, such as the old hiding-in-the-sun trick; the disabled engine faked with an overrich gas mixture; the eight-to-ten-abreast attack occurring at three-second intervals from a large formation to panic the gunners; the faked dogfight that draws closer and closer and suddenly evolves into a sudden and vicious attack; and the trick of using our own captured aircraft to stalk in close, shoot, and then run for it.

But, as in love, there are no written rules of aerial warfare. It is kill or be killed, and the best way to keep from being perforated is to expect anything and to be ready for anything.

From Berlin, our bomber crews may join up with the bomber crews spearheading toward Tokyo. Having learned from Jerry, they should be able to cope with the reportedly inferior Jap; that is, provided they remember that the cloud of castles, no matter how beautiful, may harbor a dozen cannons and a score of machine guns. Remembering this, most of them will return from their missions by air. Forget it, and it may be a long, rough haul aboard a rubber raft—or no haul at all.

THE END

"Late again, eh, Thompson?"

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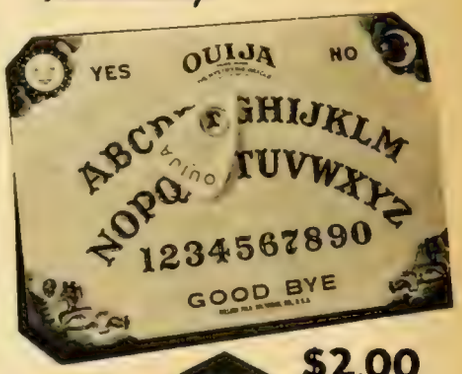

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Woman-Talk

BY MARGARET FISHBACK

TREASURE HUNT: A fashion show given in the Persian Room at the Plaza Hotel in New York by a large New York store would indicate that the best-dressed women this winter may be able to concoct their clothes at little cost, if they only have access to an attic full of trunks bulging with Grandma's finery. I have never seen so many sequins, fringes, beads, feathers, ribbons, and slices of fur used to accent and dramatize daytime, evening, lounging, and sports costumes. There was even a feather boa that writhed from neck to knee and a matching feather hat on top of which quivered a huge rose; worn with an evening frock, they looked for all the world like Grandma's best. Another frock involved a jeweled belt and a blue ribbon about two inches wide which was draped around the top of the blouse like a necklace, and fastened in front with a jeweled medallion. One of the "Home Headlines," as the lounging robes and pajamas were called, consisted of bright red pants, a white tunic, with knitted blue sleeves, plus a spangled scarf and belt. Matching sequins decked the moccasins that went along for the ride down the runway. The whole show was an object lesson on how you can use everything that might turn up in the home, from a striped silk remnant that could easily grow into a turban, to a batch of multicolored beads which could perhaps be embroidered on a red tunic to simulate a necklace.

LIFESAVER: At sixteen, Betsey Barton's back was broken in an automobile accident. Her legs have remained paralyzed for the past ten years. Not so her heart, her mind, or the rest of her body. She has wrested from her misfortune a rebirth which has brought with it vitality that puts us plodding, pedestrian human beings to shame. At twenty-six she has written her own story of adjustment in such dispassionate, vigorous language that her book And Now to Live Again excites admiration rather than pity, plus the urge to make just an average normal body, with all its members intact, do an honest-to-goodness life's work.

Her book reflects not only her own reactions to all sorts of treatment, but knowledge gained through talks with psychologists handling the rehabilitation of disabled veterans. I hesitate to use the word "disabled" after reading this magnificent book. Regardless of physical catastrophe, no one is disabled who can achieve a good life by salvaging and building on the wreck of the old. Her book will be a lifesaver to men wounded in the war and to their anxious relatives and friends. "Rebirth," says Miss Barton, "must come through a leave-taking, a purging, almost a denial of the other life, the one before. The boy with a leg now gone can revisit the winding road up which he hiked to the pool at the foot of the waterfall to fish. Of course he can. But not yet, not yet. The memories of the other life must be shut out. The steel door of repression snaps shut on them and stays shut fast. When it opens over the years and old memories are allowed to escape into the conscious, like the evils from Pandora's box, they will have lost their sting a little. . . . The memories have their use, however. They can be used as a bridge into the new life. There need be nothing wasted or lost in all of our experience. . . . The nurse takes the withered leg of the child who has just had infantile paralysis in her hand and puts it through the motions of bending and straightening. She says to the child as she does it: 'Remember how it was when you could do this for yourself. Use those memories in the muscles there.' . . . We use the old memories that can now be translated into healing material, and we are led, if we run into a good re-educator, slowly and carefully in the way of growth. The conflicts within us are not easily resolved. It demands all that is in us and all that grows in us of faith and of courage and of love. To persist, not to give up. At first, the matter of our persistence will not be up to us: it will depend entirely on the process of re-education. We are so weak, so hurt, we know so little about the nature of our anatomy and its working. It takes time to understand the body that leaped easily once at a light command and that now must be moved carefully, if at all, and with great pain."

THE URGE TO SPLURGE: Men in uniform are already champing at the bit for uninhibited peacetime plumage. Officers are exchanging bow ties, and hanging up boisterous plaid ones in their quarters to keep their inner fire alight. Colonel Kenneth Collins, back in New York after two years overseas, was persuaded by Bill Howard to remove his coat for a good rousing game of pingpong, and there blazed out triumphantly a pair of bright red suspenders. A naval officer in town for a week-end with his wife insisted that she disinter a red ski shirt from its moth balls so that he could wear it around the apartment as food for his hungry soul. They are now planning a party to celebrate his return to civilian life. All the guests are to be invited to bring some article of clothing, the noisier the better.

THE VIRTUE OF MILLIE LATIMER

Continued from Page 29

eyes shining. She had on white half boots, white camel's-hair coat, and her red wool stockings, cap, and mittens were a matched set. Chuck thought Millie wasn't so much a little girl as she was a beautiful woman.

She thought he was swell, too, tall and slim and hard. He ought to be in a play. In his mackinaw and engineer's corduroy breeches, no woman in the audience would care what the play was about.

Quail Creek was blue and slick with new ice. They skated, and it was just like the two of them were alone in the world. Then they had their picnic lunch. Chuck cleared the snow off a flat boulder, and they used it as chairs and table both.

Chuck told her about his travels. He'd been to Chicago, and Philadelphia, and Louisville, and he almost got to New Orleans once. He'd run away from home when he was thirteen, and he hadn't come back till after his folks died.

Then, he said, he decided not to be a farmer. You had to work from sun-up till all hours, and you didn't get anything for it. Smart people didn't work. He'd decided to be smart. He'd mortgaged the farm, all right, but he hadn't spent the money except for a few clothes. He made his living at this and that, and he didn't work, and he had fun. It was a good life, Chuck said.

MILLIE didn't listen very close. She was thinking she'd never had so much fun, even when she was queen of the apple festival. She liked the way Chuck's white even teeth showed when he talked. She liked the hazel flecks in his eyes. She liked his eyebrows, like the wings of a hawk. He was a lot of man, and all he needed was the influence of a good woman. She told him so, and put her hand on his.

Chuck frowned and pulled his hand away.

The way he pulled his hand out from under hers gave Millie a deep thrill. He hadn't wanted to pull away. You could see that. But he was a gentleman through and through. There was good in him.

Sometimes a blizzard can break so fast that it catches animals in the open and they freeze before they find shelter. That was the way this one broke. A strong wind whooshed in from the west, rolling the clouds like tumbleweeds until there wasn't any blue sky left. And the trees bent bare branches down to the snow before it.

Chuck and Millie left the basket and their skates behind. They didn't talk about it. They couldn't, in that wind. It scooped snow and flung it into their faces, so that they had to go hand in hand or they'd lose each other.

They bent into the wind and went as fast as they could. The wind got in under their coats, and they had to work hard to keep from freezing.

Chuck pushed ahead, half dragging Millie. He knew they had to reach shelter, and the closest was the Cobley barn. It was two miles away, and he wondered if they'd give out before they made it.

Then the gray clouds threw stinging snow into their faces, and it was as if a wall moved ahead of them, about ten feet away. They crossed a couple of fences, Chuck trying his best to keep going in a straight line. They bumped into a cow once, and she followed them to the next fence, begging for help in a pitiful lowing. That told Chuck more than anything else how serious their situation was. That cow knew she would freeze if she didn't find shelter from the storm.

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Millie thought it was romantic to be fighting nature. They were two against the elements, and it was something of an adventure. She thought how Chuck was showing his qualities, and it warmed her to think she had been right all along.

After a while Millie began to drag behind, and Chuck almost pulled her arm out of its socket a couple of times.

"I'm so tired," she yelled at him above the wind. "Can't we rest a minute?"

"Keep moving!" Chuck yelled back.

It was too complicated, what with the wind filling his mouth with snow when he opened it, to tell her how people got tired in a storm, and when they sat down to rest they fell asleep for the last time. You couldn't waste energy on talk.

So Chuck plodded on into the wind. When Millie stumbled and fell, he didn't pick her up. He slapped her to her feet and shoved her ahead of him. She wasn't too heavy to carry, but he had to keep her walking, keep her blood circulating.

Every time she fell, she wanted to lie there, but he slapped her, and once he kicked her, not very hard, just to make her mad. She hauled off and smacked him in the face, then, and he didn't have to push her ahead for quite a while.

They made it to the Cobley barn, and inside, it was big and quiet and dark. And cold. They stood there shivering while the wind whooped around the barn like Comanches on the warpath, and Chuck reckoned it must be twenty below zero.

"Run up and down the barn," he told Millie, "and beat your hands together while I see if I can find anything to burn. Oh, here, wait a minute. Good thing I brought this."

He pulled out a little flask of brandy from his hip pocket, and made Millie drink some. He took a swig after her.

Then Millie ran up and down and Chuck rummaged. He broke up a milking stool and he tore up a couple of planks. He couldn't find any tools to split the planks. He climbed up into the loft and threw down an armload of hay for kindling, and built a fire on the floor of the barn.

"I'd better stand watch tonight," Chuck said. "If a spark got into that hay up there, this place would go up like a powder magazine."

This was the first time they thought about spending the night in the barn. It was still light outside, but the storm was getting worse, if anything.

Well, neither of them thought much of the idea. They could imagine how Homer Latimer would take it. Chuck could see him loading a shotgun, for he had been a friend of Leo Stackpole, and Millie could see her father tossing her out the front door for good, for she was a friend of Hilda Wombley.

There was the town to consider, too. Millie's reputation wouldn't be worth an old shoelace.

"I can't stay here," she said.

She started for the door, and Chuck grabbed her. "If you're gonna lose anything, it'll be your good name, not your life. You'd freeze before you got halfway home, even if you could find your way."

He was strong, but, to tell the truth, Millie didn't struggle very hard. He was right about freezing. Even with the fire roaring, it was so cold her breath came out almost solid.

Chuck started to feed another length of plank into the fire, but he saw the floor was burning now. At this rate, they'd burn the barn down before morning.

"Look here," he said. "We got to put this fire out, and go up in the loft. We can crawl inside the hay, and if we keep close together, we might not freeze."

"Oh, but I couldn't!" Millie said.

"You will," Chuck said, "if I have to knock you out and carry you up there. You're not going to die on my hands."

Well, Millie made him promise that everything would be all right, and pretty soon Chuck stamped out the fire. They went up and burrowed deep into the hay. He gave her another swallow of brandy, took one himself, and they got as close together as they could.

Chuck didn't even kiss her. He thought about it a lot after she went to sleep. He was going to have the name, he might as well have the game. But then a funny feeling would come over him, and he would think about something else for a while.

A search party found them the next morning, asleep in each other's arms. The searchers had all been up since sunset the night before, and when they found Chuck and Millie warm and unharmed, there were some remarks that brought Chuck down out of the loft in a hurry. But they wouldn't let him fight anybody; they marched him and Millie to town in silence. The wind had died, and the only sound was their boots crunching the snow.

WHAT would happen next would be part of a pattern. It had happened plenty of times before. Chuck would have to marry Millie or take the consequences.

Chuck knew it. He was kind of glad. Millie was awful pretty. She'd be a credit to him. She was strong and healthy, too. If he had a run of hard luck, which every gambler has now and then, she could probably find a job to tide them over.

Millie thought it was romantic.

Mrs. Latimer grabbed Millie when they came up the walk. She cried and took on some, and then she saw Chuck. She called him a lot of names and she talked about her little girl being ruined.

"Mama," Millie broke in, "shut up."

Mrs. Latimer shut her mouth. There was something in Millie's voice. This was a different Millie. She carried herself stiff and straight, and Mrs. Latimer knew that her worst fears were true. Still, that made Millie a woman, and any dealings were now on a different basis than before.

"Come inside," Mrs. Latimer said. "You, too," she told Chuck.

Mrs. Latimer fixed them something to eat, and she didn't listen as Millie told about her and Chuck in the storm. Mrs. Latimer had made up her mind what had happened, and she didn't care to hear any fairy stories. Homer would get word and come in from his search party pretty soon. He could listen if he wanted to.

Chuck and Millie didn't eat much. They couldn't keep their eyes off the door.

Homer came through it pretty soon, and he touched Millie on the head. "I'm glad you're safe," he said. "Is there any coffee?"

Mrs. Latimer brought him a cup, and he sipped while Millie told her story. Maybe she made a little more of Chuck's part than she should, but still he did keep

(Continued on page 80)

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(Sam Goldwyn-RKO)
Bob Hope, Virginia Mayo, Walter Brennan

BOB HOPE'S on the loose again, in a rollicking Technicolor turmoil which burlesques all piratical adventures from Treasure Island to Frenchman's Creek. Irresponsible, undeflatable Hope, exuberantly exhaling U. S. A., 1944, stalks, creeps, quakes, and scrambles through Sam Goldwyn's gaily chromoed seventeenth century, flanked by a beauteous Goldwyn-gal princess (Virginia Mayo) and a half-witted old salt (Walter Brennan) in place of his old cronies Lamour and Crosby. But whether he's eluding the horrendous Captain Hook (Victor McLaglen), wandering among bloodthirsty desperadoes, or nonchalantly scratching the fatal map tattooed upon his chest—Hope's still Hope. A gallows to him is slumber lumber—and he doesn't want to be on the swing shift!

Plenty of frank, boisterous low comedy, laced with side remarks ribbing Paramount, Crosby, Goldwyn, and the whole works, keeps this jamboree light and lively to a bang-up gag ending.

1 Evil-tempered Pirate Hook has just captured the Princess and an old "gypsy" who's really ham-actor (Hope) Sylvester.

2 Sylvester and the Princess escape, land on a tropic island, put on an act in a low dive. The Princess wows the customers.

3 Sylvester, in The Hook's clothes, makes a pretty good fake pirate—till the real captain shows up, boiling mad.

4 Recaptured, the Princess kindly offers Sylvester one of their last bullets—through the head. But Fate intervenes.

IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

(Twentieth Century-Fox)
June Haver, Dick Haymes, Monty Woolley

IF you like big, nostalgic Technicolor musicals, full of good old songs like the one in the title and Mother Machree, all tricked out with elegant Hollywood trimmings, this will give you your money's worth. Likable, smooth-singing Dick Haymes plays Ernest R. Ball, who wrote all those sentimental ditties thirty years ago, and the story takes the usual backstage route to success and romance. Cute little June Haver plays a Grable-like role with pep and no little competence; Monty Woolley's around too, and there's pa-LEN-ty of production.

THE DOUGHGIRLS

(Warner Bros.)
Ann Sheridan, Alexis Smith, Jane Wyman

THIS celluloid version of the slightly naughty stage farce moves glamor gals Ann Sheridan, Alexis Smith, and Jane Wyman into a luxurious hotel suite in jam-packed Washington, and lets the fur fly. All three of these nifty numbers have husbands or near-husbands in the offing; due to one technicality or another, nobody's actually married. Meanwhile the suite becomes a Grand Central Station for all types of war-wacky humanity. The humor here is strained to the busting point—but nobody can say there isn't something going on all the time.

BRAZIL

(Republic)
Tito Guizar, Virginia Bruce

THANKS to vivacious, honey-tenored Tito Guizar, the infectious Latin-American music of Ary Barroso, and the separate attractions of Edward Everett Horton and Virginia Bruce, this otherwise undistinguished musical takes on considerable gaiety and life. The script, though short on continuity, has a surprising number of bright moments to bridge the gaps between the usual production numbers. As a beauteous writer touring Brazil, Virginia Bruce is gallantly guided to romance by the captivating Guizar. Not much real Brazil here, but enough for flavor.

BOWERY TO BROADWAY

(Universal)
Maria Montez, Jack Oakie, Susanna Foster

THE cast list of this aggressively uninspired musical reads like the entire Universal roster—so if you're a Montez fan, or if you go for Turhan Bey, silver-voiced Foster, for Oakie or chipper Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan, you'll catch a glimpse of 'em all in the crowd. The story's about two showmen who progress from the Bowery, 1895, to Broadway, 1944, by way of a desultory series of performances of one kind or another. Aside from one side-splitting minstrel-style conversation by colored boys Moreland and Carter, the journey seems pretty long.

SPECIAL MENTION

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE (M-G-M). Brian Donlevy, Ann Richards, Walter Abel.
The romance of American industry and one man's family, finely documented in Technicolor.
DRAGON SEED (M-G-M). Katharine Hepburn, Walter Huston, Aline MacMahon.
A superb treatment of Pearl Buck's novel about wartime China.
FRENCHMAN'S CREEK (Paramount). Joan Fontaine, Arturo de Cordova, Basil Rathbone.
A super-sumptuous, swashbuckling Technicolor romance. Fills the eye rather than the heart.
NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART (RKO). Cary Grant, Ethel Barrymore, Barry Fitzgerald.
Fine acting and gloom in Clifford Odets' version of the novel set in the London slums.
WILSON (20th Century-Fox). Alexander Knox, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Charles Coburn, Ruth Nelson.
A grandly sweeping portrayal of idealist Wilson and his whole era. Top-notch film Americana.

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★ ★ ★ ★

In short, we're in good humor, and all because we've seen the most alluring musical motion picture since our movie-going began . . . M-G-M's "Meet Me In St. Louis".

★ ★ ★ ★

Whoops! Back you go to the old World's Fair in St. Louis as the guests of the Smith family, of which our favorite members are played by Judy Garland and Margaret O'Brien.

★ ★ ★ ★

What gay, nostalgic, wonderful entertainment this is, enriched in every scene by rainbow Technicolor!

★ ★ ★ ★

Judy Garland seems to have been born for the part of Esther, a high school girl just awakening to love—for the boy next door. Esther is young, innocent, vivacious, and golden-voiced.

★ ★ ★ ★

You will have to decide for yourself whether you prefer Judy's provocative presentation of a young girl in love or Judy's singing. Perhaps you'll find, as we did, both talents perfectly fused in "Over The Banister", "The Boy Next Door", or that bell-ringing success, "The Trolley Song". And these are only three of eight songs!

★ ★ ★ ★

Judy (that is, Esther) has a sister—an impish, devilish, utterly lovable kid named "Tootie". In this part, Margaret O'Brien will become everyone's sweetheart—if she isn't everyone's sweetheart already.

★ ★ ★ ★

Tom Drake, one of M-G-M's latest finds, plays the boy next door and heads a splendidly-chosen supporting cast including Mary Astor, Marjorie Main, Lucille Bremer, Joan Carroll, Henry H. Daniels, Jr., Leon Ames, and Harry Davenport.

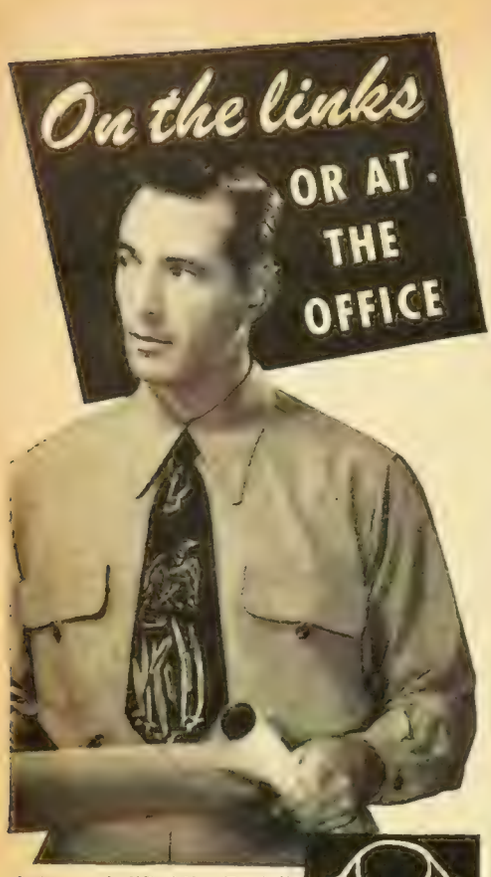
★ ★ ★ ★

The script was written by Irving Brecher and Fred F. Finklehoffe. Arthur Freed, who gave us "Girl Crazy", produced, and Vincente Minnelli directed. They all have cause for pride.

★ ★ ★ ★

Mark our words: M-G-M's "Meet Me In St. Louis" will strike you as about the best tuneful repast ever displayed for your delight!

—*Leo*



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(Continued from page 76)

her alive, slapping her to her feet and kicking her once.

When Millie was through, Homer didn't hesitate. He walked right over to Chuck. Chuck jumped up and backed off, but Homer stuck out his hand. "I am very grateful to you, Mr. Baker. I couldn't have asked for better treatment for Millicent."

Chuck shook hands without noticing what he was doing. "You mean you're not sore, Mr. Latimer?"

"On the contrary." He turned to his wife. "Is there more coffee?"

She got him some, and Chuck just stood there, like he didn't know what to do.

Homer went over to Millie. He smiled down at her. "You'd better go brush the hay out of your hair, Millicent."

Chuck blurted, "Well, when it is going to be?"

Homer turned on him, slow. He didn't say anything.

"I'm ready to marry her," Chuck said.

"Marry Millicent? You? Not likely."

"You know what people will say."

"And will that change the facts?"

"Well, no, but I'm not gonna let anybody pass remarks about her. And you're not a very good father if you stand for it."

"Sit down," Homer said gently. Chuck did, but he kept his fist clenched. Homer sat down too. "Mr. Baker," he said slowly, "you propose to make an honest woman of Millie. Is that it?"

"Well, sure."

"You think she is—uh—shall we say bad?"

"No, she ain't!" Chuck growled. "I better not catch anybody saying it, either. But they will, and you know it."

"And your theory is that if you marry her, they won't say it?"

"You know they won't. She'll be a married woman."

"Umm," Homer said. "But will she be any less good or bad, regardless?"

"Well, no. She'll be the same."

HOMER'S voice got louder. "Can you name a single reason, then, why she should be saddled with a pool-hall shark, why she should become the wife of a worthless sharpshooter in a cowardly concession to convention? Can you?"

Chuck yelled, "Don't her name mean anything to you?"

"Everything!" Homer snapped. "Mrs. Chuck Baker is not my idea of a respectable name."

"She'd like it!"

"Then I'm glad that she is under age."

"You mean," Chuck asked, "I'm not good enough for her?"

"Exactly."

"I'm as good as you are," Chuck shouted, "any time!"

Homer smiled. Contempt dripped off both ends of that smile. "You have thrown away your substance, completely ignoring your responsibilities to society. You're a leech, fastening onto the unwary and sucking his substance. Worse, you're a young man. You should be working toward a productive future, not robbing others of theirs. Good day, Mr. Baker. I thank you again, but good day."

Chuck stamped out and disappeared. Nobody saw him again for months.

The town didn't like it. That wasn't the way things were done. Some of the mothers of Millie's girl friends asked Reverend Kittredge to call on Homer. He ought to punish Millie, they said, and they didn't like their daughters to run around with her. Homer had let her set a bad example.

Nobody knew what happened at that meeting. Reverend Kittredge wouldn't talk about it.

Then the other members of the school board drew up a resolution demanding

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that Homer do something about Millie.

Gus Hatch was delegated to read it at the next board meeting. But when he saw Homer sitting there just as usual, Gus couldn't do it. He passed it to Harvey Thorpe, and Harvey passed it to Mrs. White. She got so flustered she almost passed it to Homer. But nobody read it.

So Millie stayed in school, and she still went to parties. When Homer took her to somebody's door, nobody had the nerve to tell her she couldn't stay. They'd take one look at Homer, tall and calm and stern, and they'd give Millie a kind of friendly hello. And she was just the same as ever, except for looking sad once in a while.

Mrs. Latimer was the only one who made things tough for Millie. She listened at Millie's door, and heard the girl crying in the night. Millie couldn't make a move that Mrs. Latimer didn't examine.

One evening, about two weeks after the night in the barn, Millie flared up at the table. "Why do you keep watching me all the time?" she burst out. "You'd think I was a criminal or something."

Homer said, "Your mother is afraid you'll get fat." He laughed so hard he had to be pounded on the back.

"I don't think that's funny," Millie said. "I'm losing weight, if anything."

Millie was losing weight, all right. She tried to find Chuck. She even went inside the pool hall once, but the gang told her they'd looked everywhere for him.

SO Millie finally came to believe, along with everybody else, that Chuck had skipped the country.

Nobody thought of looking for him on his farm. But Chuck was mad when he had stomped out of the Latimers' house. He was going to show Homer.

First he got in firewood so he wouldn't freeze. Then he started on the house. He fixed up the sags and the cracks, and he cleaned out the dirt and muck that had accumulated. Then he painted it. Next, he put the barn in shape, and he got a mule and a plow, some pigs and some feed.

When spring moved in after the robins, Chuck went to work on the rich dark earth. He turned it and harrowed it and planted it. He learned about the fine fresh mornings and the long quiet twilights. He repaired his fences and got a couple of Jersey heifers.

Then he went into Homer's express office one day. He was still mad. "You come with me, Homer Latimer," he said.

Homer went along, out to Chuck's farm. Chuck showed him around.

"I've got corn over there, potatoes here, and I'll put that upper twenty in wheat," Chuck said. "I got a truck garden on the other side of the house. I done it myself, working like a dog all winter. Now let's hear you say I'm no good."

Homer shook his head. "Let's not hear me say it."

"And I got something else to tell you," Chuck went on. "Let's go in the house. I'll fix a snack, and we'll talk it over."

Chuck scrambled some eggs and fried bacon. When they were across the table from each other, he said, "I'm going to call on Millicent. Just try and stop me."

"I don't intend to, Mr. Baker. But, until she is through school, you'll have to leave by nine o'clock."

"Nine?" Chuck said. "You think I'm gonna stay up all night? I'll leave by eight, anyway. You got to get up early to make a farm pay."

Homer grinned. "I think you'll make it pay. You're a good farmer, Mr. Baker."

Chuck looked surprised. He studied a minute. "Son of a gun," he said softly. "I guess I am, at that."

"Pass the bread," Homer said.

THE END

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DEC. 9, 1944

PAUL HUNTER
Publisher
EDWARD MAHER
Editor

The golden moment to choose.

A GOLDEN MOMENT IS APPROACHING

THE turning points in a man's life or in a nation's destiny are seldom evident at the time of happening. It is almost axiomatic that men and nations come to recognize the big moments of their history only after a passage of years. Thus, opportunities knock and are gone, unrealized until it is too late.

There is a mood upon the world today which affords the human race an opportunity which has been a long time in coming and may never come again.

This mood is perhaps a fleeting one. Unless the opportunity it presents is grasped now, it will pass away. It will not return again until a catastrophe even worse than the present war afflicts the world. For the first time on an international scale man is in a mood to take his evil nature by the horns and do something about it. People everywhere have had their bellyful of war and bloodletting. They are eager for peace and for the establishment of a world order in which peace will endure.

Even stiff-necked diplomats and foreign affairs officials feel the mood of the people and seem anxious to find ways of agreeing, even at some sacrifice of so-called national dignity and selfish national interest.

In every country of the world, even those of our enemies, there is a mood for peace and a realization that war is brutal, degrading, and in the long run unprofitable.

What is there that we in America can do to make sure this present mood of mankind is utilized? How can we make sure this golden moment does not pass without action to achieve a stable, co-operative, neighborly world in which war and the horrors of war can be forgotten?

The most important business before the new Congress that meets in January will be to determine the extent of America's participation in such a co-operative effort. It is our Congress and is responsible to our will. We can, if we want, see to it that there is an end to obstinacy and that prompt action is taken to assure America's leadership in a world organization to preserve peace.

No such organization will be perfect. There are those among us who will call it starry-eyed idealism—who will say there always have been and always will be wars; who will say we must look to our own selfish interests and trust no one.

Without starry-eyed idealism no world organization has a chance of being set up in the first place, or of working after it is set up. The Ten Commandments are starry-eyed idealism, but they are a guide to decency in human relations. Though often broken, it is hard to imagine a civilized world without them.

There will come a time during the life of this new Congress when the chance to achieve the world's desire for peace must be grasped, not only for America but for all the world. Let us each resolve now to see this thing through, to watch for this issue, and to make our wishes felt during the debate. Let us resolve not to be misled by the exhortations of the die-hards and thus be kept from our objective of world peace through international co-operation.

Paul Hunter

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